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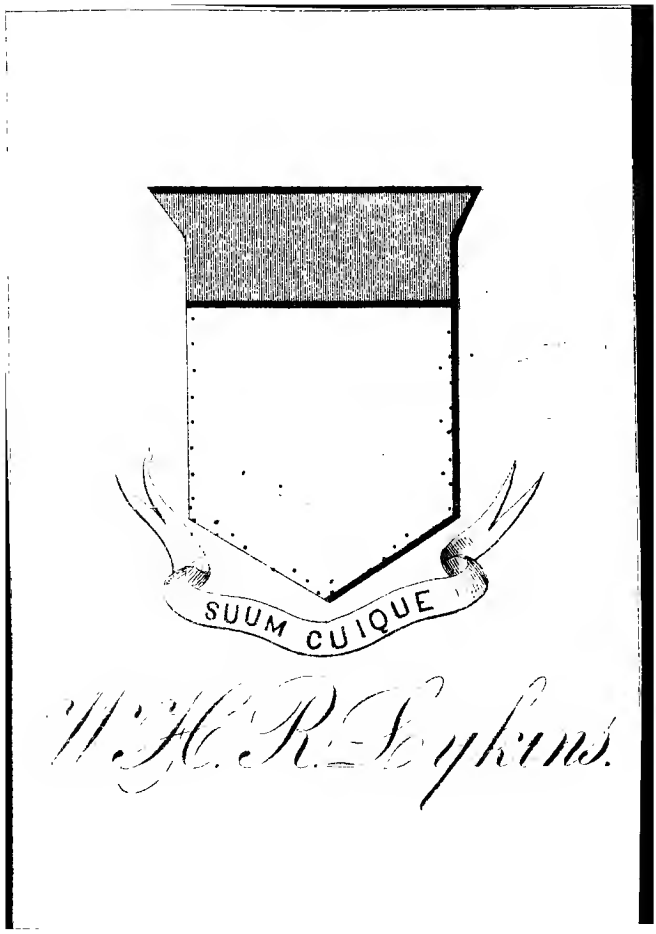

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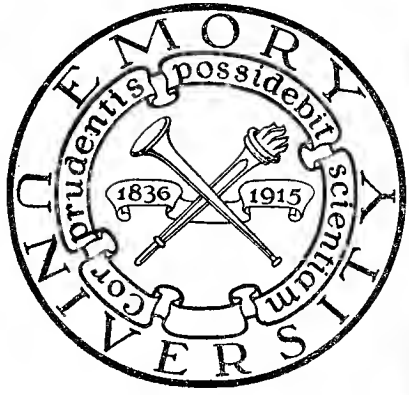

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THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

Bertrand du Guesclin.

E. Radclyffe

Bertrand du Guesclin

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

A History of the Fourteenth Century.

By D. F. JAMISON,

Of South Carolina.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON: TRÜBNER & CO., PATERNOSTER ROW

CHARLESTON: JOHN RUSSELL.

MDCCCLXIV.

Entered according to the Act of Congress of the Confederate States of America,
BY JOHN RUSSELL,
In the District Court for the District of South Carolina.

TO

W. GILMORE SIMMS, ESQ., LL.D.

MY DEAR SIR,

In looking abroad for one to whom I might inscribe this volume, I know of no one to whom I can more worthily dedicate it than to you—to you, my nearest neighbour and one of my oldest friends; to you, who first suggested the work as one suited to my capacity, my tastes, and to what little learning I possessed; who watched over its progress with scarcely less interest than if it had been your own; and who cheered me on, through the years of labour it has cost me, to its final completion now.

To me it will be a pleasing reflection, that we, who have lived under the same sky, who have looked to heaven for the same refreshing rains, and for its grateful sunshine; that we, who have so long interchanged our thoughts on questions of deep interest, and who have sympathized in each others' joys and sorrows,—should have our names associated in the minds of men, when we shall no longer be affected either by their praise or their censure.

> "Inque sepulchro,
> Si non urna, tamen junget nos littera. Si non
> Ossibus ossa meis, at nomen nomine tangam."

Ever most truly yours,

D. F. JAMISON.

BURWOOD, *Feb. 17th*, 1862.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAVE attempted to rescue from oblivion the name of a man whose deeds are now almost unknown to the English, whom he opposed in a life-long conflict, and are regarded somewhat in the light of a myth by a large body of the French people, whom he defended ; whose fame, during a great portion of the fourteenth century, was only inferior, if it was inferior, to that of Edward III. of England and his heroic son the Black Prince.

Coming forth from the wild forests of Brittany, with no advantages of education or birth, for he was the son of a poor and obscure knight, he became the leader of a band of adventurers, during the wars between John de Montfort and Charles de Blois for the succession to the duchy of Brittany ; and, by dint of personal prowess, courage, and sagacity, he first extended his reputation throughout his native province, and then, attracting the notice of the king of France by his daring courage at the siege of Melun and his triumphant victory at Cocherel, he led the Free Companies into Spain, dethroned Peter the Cruel, and placed Henry of Trastamara on the throne of Castille; when, returning to his own country, he was created constable over the

highest heads in the realm, and, by his prudence, firmness, and military skill, gradually drove the English out of all their extended possessions in France, until little was left to them but the city of Bordeaux in the south and Calais in the north. Such were the achievements of Bertrand du Guesclin.

To the high qualities of mind and heart, which insured success, were added the virtues of generosity, good faith, and loyalty, which secured esteem; and no one of his time was more regarded in life or more regretted in death. It seemed to me, therefore, a worthy object to sweep from his memory the dust in which time was fast enveloping it, and preserve, for our own and subsequent years, the records of a life that derived its chief lustre from the stern virtues of the man, without those external advantages of fortune on which we commonly set so high a value.

No period of the past has appeared to me more interesting and instructive than that portion of mediæval history which is embraced within the limits of this work. It was a period of transition from one state of civilization to another, when the old elements of society began to give way: to be replaced by new forms, or to be charged with new functions. It was the period when the feudal system, which had attained its utmost vigour during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, with its traditions, its isolation, and real power, was forced to yield to the increasing authority of the prince, the growing influence of the communes and of men acting in masses. It was the period when the Crusades, which had precipitated one continent upon another for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, was little more than a reminiscence, and when the enthusiasm of Europe could no longer be aroused to arms at the bidding of the church;

and when the head of that church, which had for centuries exercised a sway so potent over the Germanic nations after they had been transplanted on the Roman soil—driven from Rome, by schism and the factions of Italy, to "seventy years of captivity" at Avignon—was scarcely respected by sovereigns, and little reverenced by the people. It was the period when the institution of chivalry, which had so long exerted its humanizing influences over the individual man, and softened the manners of a barbarous age—with all its romance, its tournaments, and pageants—began to decline; and when woman, who had been too much idolized before marriage and too secluded after it, came to exert a more wholesome influence on society, because it was more diffused. It was the period when, by the discovery of gunpowder, the lance and battle-axe began to give place to cannon and the matchlock, and when a standing military force came to be substituted for the hasty levies of the feudal militia; and it was the period when romantic literature disappeared with the songs of the troubadours; when, during the reigns of Edward III. of England and Charles the Wise of France, the Latin language became less extensively used in the preparation of state papers and the preservation of historical records; and when Chaucer in the first-named country, and Froissart in the last, employed their native tongues to give forth to the people the effusions of poetry, and to chronicle the passing events of the times.

It was my design to introduce the work which is now offered to the public by a brief sketch of the state of Europe, from the commencement to the middle of the fourteenth century; and, particularly, to show the general character of feudalism, its influence on society and manners by the isolation of the

individual man, by its destruction of all political unity, its segregation of the people into a multitude of small sovereignties, and in the entire absence of a controlling head or central government—that the feudal epoch, which may be comprised between the reigns of Hugh Capet and Philippe de Valois in France, was marked by private wars, as distinguished from national, between one feudal lord and another, for the increase of power and the extension of territory, and by the Crusades which terminated with it; and in what manner feudalism gave way before the increasing influence of the throne and the communities; but neither the circumstances of the times nor my own situation permitted me to carry out this purpose.

The original draft of the work was completed—after seven or eight years of assiduous labour, during the intervals of leisure from other and engrossing employments—a little more than two years ago; and I had set myself to the task of re-writing the whole, of which not above one hundred and twenty pages of manuscript were completed, when the work was suspended by my public duties, in the month of December, 1860. About the 1st of June of the following year I resumed the revision, which was finished just one year ago, about the gloomiest period of the great struggle between the South and the North, when Fort Donelson fell and Nashville was occupied by our enemies. Amidst the distractions of passing events, I attempted to write the introduction which I had designed; but the times to me were then too sad to inquire into the history of the past—the present absorbed all my thoughts; and now, if the prospect is less gloomy than before, I have no leisure from my public engagements to carry out my design.

After completing the revision, I placed the MS. in my escritoir, to await more peaceable and happy times; and the work would not now have seen the light, but for the kind offers of one whom I am happy to call my friend—of Theodore D. Wagner, Esq., a distinguished member of the patriotic and princely house of John Fraser and Co. of Charleston, and Fraser, Trenholm, and Co. of Liverpool.

I am aware that I incur two serious risks in trusting the work to the chances of capture by an ever-vigilant enemy now blockading our harbour, and infesting the seas between this port and the place of its destination, as well as in trusting the proofs of its publication to any other eye than my own. This risk is especially great, as, with few exceptions, it will be found that I have used none but original materials in the composition of the work; and, as the references in the notes, with which I have taken especial pains, are to authorities in old French and Spanish of the fourteenth century, mediæval Latin, and occasionally in Gascon, the author must incur the hazard of many errors in the publication. As these risks are unavoidable, if I publish now at all, I will entrust my labours of many years to the bosom of the Atlantic and to a foreign hand, in the hope of realizing what Solomon declares as the result of acts of beneficence done at a venture :—"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

CHARLESTON, *Feb.* 14*th*, 1863.

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CHAPTER I.

Birth, parentage, and early training of Bertrand du Guesclin. His first exploit at a tournament in the town of Rennes.

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN, who was destined to play a part so conspicuous in the affairs of Europe during a great portion of the fourteenth century, was born about the year 1320, in the castle of Mote-de-Bron, about six leagues from the town of Rennes, in the province of Brittany. He was the son of Regnault du Guesclin,* and Jeanne du Malemains, a lady of Sens, near Fougères, and the eldest of four sons and six daughters. Of his brothers, Oliver was the only one who reached the years of maturity, and who survived him.†

* "Regnault du Guesclin fu le père à l'enfant,
D'une moult gentil dame et de moult bel semblant."
—*Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin*, par Cuvelier, Trouvère du XIVème Siècle. Publié pour la première fois, par E. Charrière. Paris, 1839. Verse 52. The poetical chronicle of Cuvelier has been edited by M. Charrière from two manuscripts. Of these he has published the first, consisting of 22,790 lines, which came from the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, in two vols. 4to, as the text, the lines regularly numbered; and portions of the second, taken from the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, as variations from the first, printed at the foot of the pages where they occur. The first will be referred to by the numbers of the lines, and the second as "MS. of the Arsenal," with the volume and page.

† *Histoire de Bertrand du Guesclin.* Par Paul Hay, Seigneur du Chastelet. (Folio.) Paris, 1666. Page 4. In this work the author

The want of personal attractions in infancy, of which Bertrand seemed fully conscious in after life, but only to make his ugliness the subject of jest or banter, was assigned as the chief cause of the little affection with which his parents regarded him; and their aversion was carried to such an extent, that, in the language of the chronicler, "his father and mother hated him so much, that often in their hearts they wished him dead or drowned."

Infancy passed without love is sure to produce, in any child of spirit, as its inevitable results, disobedience, obstinacy, and rebellion; and thus it turned out with the young Bertrand: for, when he perceived that he was the object of scorn and contempt to his parents—that he was slighted by the servants, and that the most mortifying distinctions were made from time to time between himself and his brothers and sisters—the apparent injustice of the treatment aroused all the fierce passions of his youthful nature, and he gave early symptoms of that pugnacious and indomitable spirit which the troubled events of that stormy period were so well calculated to draw forth and develop in after life. When he was but six years of age he made a bold, and, as it turned out, a successful attempt to resent the ill-treatment practised towards him, and to level the distinctions daily made in the family to his prejudice. The incident took place at dinner, when his mother and the rest of the children were at their usual places around the table, and Bertrand was seated apart on a low stool; he suddenly

has enlarged upon the extravagances of the contemporary chroniclers, and made many fabulous additions from his own stock. No tale could be too exaggerated for his credulity; and he gravely states, as an historical fact, the verification of one of the prophecies of Merlin. As he makes no reference to his authorities, the chief value of the work is his Appendix, entitled "Preuves de Bertrand du Guesclin," which contains some original papers of interest.

seized a stick, and, jumping on the table, exclaimed in great passion:—

"Ought you all to sit there? You eat the first, and I am forced to wait like a slave: I will sit with you, and if you say a word, I will destroy the bread, meat, and wine."

His brother Oliver, probably overawed by his menacing look and gesture, kindly invited him to sit down amongst them; but when he had done so, and while he was seizing upon the viands within his reach, his mother angrily cried out:—

"Bertrand, if you do not begone, I will have you whipped."

At this threat, Bertrand immediately got up, overturned the table, and destroyed everything that was upon it; "so that there remained neither bread, wine, nor capon."

"By heaven!" said the astonished mother, "this rude cartman! Would to God he were dead! I well know that he will be no honour to his family: for there is in him neither sense, manners, nor reason."

On another occasion, at the Feast of the Ascension, while his father and guests of distinction were present, and when Bertrand was again seated apart, on the floor, while his brothers had places at the table, a Converse* from a neighbouring abbey was introduced, who joined the company at dinner. This person was much esteemed for her wisdom, her skill in medicine, and her knowledge of palmistry; and

* A lay sister, perhaps a converted Jewess; for Cuvelier, ver. 91, says:—

"Juise avoit esté en sa renacion."

Du Chastelet says, without giving any authority, that she was the daughter of a learned Jewish physician, and that she had been converted to Christianity after his death; that, with the science of medicine, she had acquired a perfect knowledge of the Cabala, and of divination, as practised by the Hebrews and Chaldeans.—*Hist. de du Guesclin*, p. 5.

her attention was soon attracted by the position and treatment of Bertrand, seated apart from the rest on his little stool. After observing the boy for some time, and hearing the harshest epithets applied to him—some calling him a shepherd, some a cartman—the Converse said to him:—

"My child, may He who suffered passion bless thee!"

Bertrand, little accustomed to kind words, and supposing that she, like the others, was amusing herself at his expense, haughtily replied:—

"Let me alone! If you say anything ill of me, I will strike you with this stick."

"Be not angry," replied the Converse, kindly, to this rude speech; "I have said nothing to displease you; on the contrary, I mean to tell you something that will give you pleasure. Now show me your hand, and I will tell you of the honour and good fortune that will befall you."

"By my faith," said the boy, still with passion, "I well believe that I shall have neither joy nor honour; for my father and mother both harshly repel me, and I never could tell why."*

"Lady," asked the Converse, then approaching the mother of Bertrand, "is not that your son?"

"He is," replied the mother; "but truly my lord never loved him. A rude and ungracious boy he is; he fights the children and tumbles them over and over, for nothing can withstand him. If any one, no matter how great he may be, displeases him, Bertrand will strike him in a moment. He is a worthless blockhead, without sense or manners: I have often wished that he were dead."

The Converse chided the mother for her harsh judgment, and the unkind treatment of her own offspring; and, after examining the boy more attentively, she predicted that he

* Cuvelier, "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 6, 7.

would be wise and fortunate, and that no one would be more esteemed throughout the realm of France.

Bertrand was overcome by such unusual sympathy, and his whole demeanour was at once changed. At that moment he took from a servant a dish containing a peacock, which had been served up for dinner, and placing it before the Converse, he made a childish apology for his rude return for her kindness, and then filled a glass with wine, which he offered her. The father, still incredulous, smiled at the prediction of the Converse, telling her that she well understood her art of deception; but the mother, after observing the change of manner in her son, under the influence of a few kind words, was softened, perhaps convinced, by the prophecy of her guest, and ever afterwards treated Bertrand more kindly.*

The youth of Bertrand was not passed in the schools. At that period all learning was almost exclusively confined to the cloister, and knowledge was then acquired from men, not from books. It might occasion surprise that the son of a landed proprietor, at a time when the possession of land always conferred position and rank, was suffered to grow up to manhood with a profound ignorance of the simplest elements of knowledge which are now imparted to the meanest peasant; but that surprise will cease when it is remembered that, in the early part of the fourteenth century, education, as now understood and appreciated, was scarcely regarded as an accomplishment, and could not really be a necessity, when books in general were unattainable, and, if they could be procured, were chiefly devoted to theology and the philosophical questions of the times, and for the most part were sealed up, to all but the monkish scholar, in an ancient and unspoken tongue. It was to a contemporary

* Cuvelier, vv. 78, 153; "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 7, 9.

of du Guesclin, the renowned Froissart, with his enlightened curiosity, his large faith and his easy credulity, that France was indebted for that great record, in a living language, of what has since become indispensable in making up the history of the greater portion of Europe in his times. But the young Bertrand possessed none of these advantages. In the rude school in which he was trained, his will was subjected to no discipline, his mind was fettered by no rules, and his taste improved by no art or accumulated wisdom of contemporaneous or past times. A rude narrative of an adventurous crusader or a valiant knight; a simple incident of every-day life; a feat of arms or tale of love, as sung by some wandering minstrel;—these were the chief, if not the only means that were then possessed by the many of acquiring knowledge.

One of his usual sports, when he had attained the age of nine years, was to assemble the children on his father's estate, to the number of forty or fifty, arrange them as in a tournament, and compel them to fight against each other. In these combats he fully participated, and when the victory seemed to incline to one side, he commonly renewed the contest by joining the other party. These youthful battles seldom ended without bloody noses and tattered garments, to which Bertrand gave little heed. He often excited the ardour of the young combatants to the utmost, by shouting his war-cry—"Guesclin!"—a name which he and his companions little dreamed would become so formidable in the subsequent battles of his country.

When these contests had lasted sufficiently long, Bertrand put an end to them by his command, which was always obeyed. He would then invite his young companions to some neighbouring tavern, telling them that he would pay the reckoning as long as he had any money; and if the host would trust him for the balance, he would pay him soon, if

he had to pawn a silver cup, or sell one of his father's horses at Rennes.*

These rough pastimes of Bertrand, however annoying to others, were sport to him. They were not so to his mother; for, when she saw him return with his face bloody and his clothes all torn, she severely upbraided him for the life he was leading, so unworthy of the son of a gentleman. She sneeringly alluded to the prophecy of the Converse, as to his future greatness, and threatened him with her sore displeasure, if he repeated such scenes. "But Bertrand," says the chronicler, "on the morrow, did worse by half." He set up quintains† for practice with the lance, and he made lists for his companions to joust, as in a tournament, offering a prize to the successful combatant as the reward of skill or valour. The rude sports of young Bertrand at length attracted the attention of his father, who, in order to put a stop to them, forbade the children of his tenants to join his son, and imposed a fine upon the parents who permitted their children to accompany him. But, when the boys fled from him in obedience to the injunction, he followed them up and assailed them, whether they would consent or not. Upon the complaint of the parents of the children, Bertrand was confined in a room in his father's castle, where he was kept a close prisoner for four months.

The severity of such a punishment would have subdued the spirit of almost any other boy; but it had a contrary

* Cuvelier, vv. 154, 212.

† *Quittaines.* Cuvelier, v. 214. In the chronicle of Matthew of Westminster—vol. ii. p. 324, "Bohn's Ant. Library"—the game is called *quintain.* Du Cange describes it as a ludicrous equestrian exercise, which consisted in charging with the lance at a moveable and versatile figure, dressed like a man, with a shield on the left arm, and a staff or sword in the right hand. If the figure was struck anywhere but on the breast, the assailant received a blow from the staff of the figure in passing. —*Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis.* Halæ, 1772, voc. *Quintana.*

effect upon Bertrand: for, when he became weary with waiting for his release, he one day seized the chambermaid who brought his food, took away the keys of his prison, locked her up in his stead, and fled from the castle. After wandering about for some time, he saw a labourer ploughing with two horses belonging to his father, one of which he took, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the ploughman, and mounting it, rode to the house of his uncle, in the town of Rennes, where he was received with coldness and reproaches on the part of his aunt, but with unreserved kindness by his uncle. The latter reproved his wife for her unkind greeting of the young Bertrand, excused the charges alleged against him as the pardonable excesses of youth, and kindly told him that he should not want good cheer while his stores of old wine and salt meat lasted.

During his residence at the house of his uncle, an incident occurred which shows that Bertrand had lost none of his fondness for the rude sports of the peasantry, for indulging which he was then an exile from his father's house, and that he preferred rather to fight than to pray. He had then reached the age of seventeen,* and, as his chief amusement consisted in the rides which he was frequently invited to take with his uncle and aunt in their excursions on horseback, he was rejoiced to hear that a prize was to be awarded at a wrestling match, which was to take place on the following Sunday. But it happened on that day that the aunt of Bertrand desired him to accompany her to hear service at church; and, though reluctantly, he felt compelled to comply with her wishes. After entering the church with his aunt, Bertrand, in the expectation of witnessing the sport and returning before the service was over, left the church

* "N'eust que xvii. ans, se l'istoire ne ment." Cuvelier, "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 14.

stealthily, after the sermon was commenced, and repaired to the place where the contest had already begun. He was joyously received by his acquaintances, who predicted his success; but he would only consent to participate in their amusements on the condition that they would keep the fact concealed from his aunt. Though young, he was well grown, muscular, and strongly built. He was of middle height; his skin was brown, his nose flat, his eyes light grey; and he had broad shoulders, long arms, and small hands.* It was his fortune to contend for the prize with a Breton who had already thrown twelve of his companions; but Bertrand was skilful as well as strong, and in the end he threw his antagonist, though in the fall he was severely wounded in the knee by striking it against a sharp flint. He was borne by his companions to the house of his aunt, who was greatly displeased at finding in what manner, and among whom, he had been spending his time; telling him how unbecoming it was for him, the son of a knight, to contend with such base fellows, instead of amusing himself at tournaments, with the shock of the lance. He bore this reproof with unusual humility, and solemnly promised, as soon as he was able to ride, that he would seek jousts and tournaments, and never again offend in like manner.†

Bertrand remained a year at the house of his uncle before he became reconciled to his father and was restored to the paternal roof. Then, whenever he heard of jousts and tournaments, he went to them, mounted on one of his father's horses. He was well received everywhere, and he made many friends by his profuse liberality: for if he met a beggar who entreated an alms for the love of God, if he had

* *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Sire Bertrand du Guesclin*, ch. i. p. 2. Edited by J. A. C. Buchon, in his *Panthéon Littéraire*." Paris, 1842.

† Cuvelier, "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 14, 15.

no other means, Bertrand would pull off his robe and give it to him. This conduct, observes the chronicler, gave his father great pleasure.*

In the year 1338, when Bertrand was eighteen years of age, the whole province of Brittany was put in commotion on the occasion of the marriage of Jeanne la Boiteuse, Countess of Penthiévre, and niece of the Duke of Brittany, with Charles de Chastillon, son of the Count de Blois. The festival which was to be given in honour of this event was to be held at the town of Rennes, where a tournament was proclaimed by a number of noble knights and bold esquires in honour of their mistresses. Thither Bertrand du Guesclin also repaired, with the valiant knights and squires to the number of one hundred and twenty, and the fair ladies "as white as the *fleur de lis*;" but he was greatly cast down at his own mean apparel and equipments on such an occasion: for armour he had none, and he was mounted on a miserable pony, "which no one would have purchased for four petty florins." To add to his mortification, he was subjected to the taunts and ribald jests of the populace. "He is the son of a knight," said one, "and he is riding the horse of a miller." "He looks like a cowherd," said another. "Hush!" said a third; "I have heard such things of that youth, that if the Duke of Brittany knew him he would make him his pantler."

When Bertrand reached the market-place, where the lists were erected, and saw the ladies seated in their places, and richly clothed in silk, braid, and cendal;† the knights well armed, and mounted on splendid coursers; and the good squires well provided for the jousts—while he, in shabby

* Cuvelier, v. 405.

† "*Cendal*, or *sendal*, is what we call taffety," says Du Cange, in his "Notes to Joinville's Memoirs of St. Louis," p. 353.—"Bohn's Ant. Library." See also Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Cendalum*.

apparel, was astride of his bare-backed pony, he bitterly ejaculated: "O God! if I only had a good horse, and I were well armed, I would assault all the bravest knights, and gain more honour than Roland, Gauvain, Arthur, or Perceval. My father does great wrong to treat me so vilely. He does not maintain me like his own son. He is so rich, yet he refuses me the value of four pins: moreover, he sets his spies upon me, and tells every one that I am a *bobus*."

Bertrand, however, was not permitted long to indulge his mingled feelings—of admiration, for the fair ladies who had assembled to witness the greatest spectacle of the times; of envy, on account of the splendid equipments of the combatants; and of chagrin, at his own pitiful figure;—for the signal, on horn and trumpet, was given for the jousts* to commence, and all eyes were turned with eager gaze on the adventurous participants in that dangerous pastime. Various were the incidents, various the fortunes of the combatants on that eventful day; many lances were broken, many heads uncasqued, and many knights and squires, with their horses, overthrown. Of these brave knights and squires, successful or unsuccessful, history has only preserved the name of Sir Regnault du Guesclin, the father of Bertrand, who, with the consent of all, was regarded as the best jouster on that day, and who, with his lance lowered, remained undisputed master of the field.

While these events were passing—the greater part of which was unseen by Bertrand, and he was burning with desire to participate in them—a squire was observed to ride

* "The joust," says St. Palaye, "was, properly speaking, a combat with the lance, man to man; but the meaning of the word was extended to other kinds of combat, by the abuses of our ancient writers, who, in thus confounding the terms, often produce confusion in our ideas."—*Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, p. 131, note (56). Edition of Ch. Nodier. Paris, 1826.

out of the lists, and proceed to his lodgings in the town; either satiated with the sport, or possibly disgusted with his ill-success. Bertrand instantly followed this man, who turned out to be a kinsman of his mother. Entering the chamber where the squire was disarming, Bertrand threw himself on his knees, and humbly entreated him, with rude but touching eloquence, to lend him the use of his harness to run three courses with the lance. The squire immediately recognised Bertrand, and courteously replied: "Ha! fair cousin, this you should not ask for, but take as your own." He then quickly armed Bertrand, gave him the use of his war-horse and a valet to attend him.

Joyously came Bertrand into the field. This was unhoped for good-fortune; it was a complete triumph. He had exchanged his wretched pony for a well-trained courser, and covered his shabby apparel with a full suit of armour. He first commended himself to God, passed the barriers, and rode fearlessly into the lists. As soon as he entered, a knight rode towards him and demanded a joust.

The institution of chivalry was on the decline when a squire was permitted to joust with a knight. *No one, unless he is a knight, should dare to offer combat to a knight*, was the maxim of ancient chivalry; and the law was in conformity with the usage, for it did not accord to the squire the duel, or gage of battle, against a knight. But, in process of time, the knights lost many of the prerogatives which gave them pre-eminence over the squires; and, from the commencement of the fourteenth century, they admitted the latter to mingle with them in the tournaments, and to claim the wager of battle.*

Bertrand, then, as soon as he observed the intimation of

* St. Palaye, *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, tom. i. p. 49, note (56), and p. 280, note (6).

his antagonist, immediately assented by waving his hand; and the two combatants, at the same moment, spurred their horses against each other. When Bertrand saw his opponent approach, he directed his lance against him with such good aim, that the point, entering the vizor, carried off the helmet from his head; and so great was the impetuosity of the charge, that both knight and horse rolled over on the ground. The horse was killed by the onset, and the knight swooned away, so that all the bystanders thought he was dead. Bertrand kept his seat firmly; and the heralds, seeing the skilful thrust he had made, and not knowing his name or his war-cry, all began to cry out, "The Adventurous Squire!"

The knight who had been overthrown was quickly raised up by his attendants, and his dead horse removed from the lists. The discomfited knight was much commended for the manner in which he had deported himself in the combat, and as soon as he recovered his consciousness he exclaimed:—

"Ye gods! by whom was I assailed? Never was a lance better aimed. Go," he continued, to a servant, "and demand of the squire his name and family."

The messenger made the inquiry, and on his return said to his master:—

"You will not find out who he is, unless he is unhelmeted by yourself or another, then you will know."

"Bring me quickly another horse," replied the knight; "I will never rest until I find out by whom I was overthrown. Whoever he may be, he is a gentleman, and of gentle blood."

The sudden appearance and gallant bearing of the young horseman, whom nobody knew, produced some confusion among the combatants, and there were few among them who did not hesitate to cross lances with him. They thereupon held a consultation about the stranger; but no one could give any information concerning him. Sir Regnault du

Guesclin, who, with his party, was in possession of the field, when he saw the knights retreat from the stranger, was anxious to attack him, and avenge the discomfiture of the knight who had been unhorsed, and who belonged to his side. He therefore put spurs to his horse, and took a position to attack Bertrand, who was no less anxious for the engagement; but in the charge, when he recognised his father by the device on his shield, he dropped the point of his lance, passed him, and returned to his place on the field. Another knight, who thought that Bertrand had avoided the engagement with Sir Regnault du Guesclin through fear, advanced towards him and offered him battle. Bertrand readily accepted the challenge, and in the shock struck his antagonist on the helmet with such force that it was carried to the distance of twelve feet. The heralds, again witnessing the precision of Bertrand's aim, all cried out, "The Adventurous Stranger!"

After fifteen courses, in which many lances were broken, and in which Bertrand was successful, Sir Regnault du Guesclin, who was surprised that the gallant stranger refused to joust with him, ordered the knights of his party to assemble, and take counsel how they could discover who this squire was that jousted so bravely. In that consultation it was determined that a Norman knight of great prowess should attack and endeavour to unhelmet him. This was effected in the manner proposed, and Bertrand was recognised, to the great astonishment and delight of his friends and family. When his father saw him, he came up with joyous face, and said aloud, "Fair son, I assure you that I will never treat you so vilely again as I have done heretofore. You shall have horses, silver and gold, at your desire; and for the gallantry you have this day shown, you may go whithersoever you will to acquire renown, if I have for a long period to mortgage my lands."

To Bertrand the prize of valour was adjudged, and the ceremony of awarding the prize closed the sports of the day. He accompanied his father home, and when his mother heard that he had gained the prize at the tournament at Rennes, she received the intelligence with great pleasure, and recalled the prophecy of the Converse. From his father he obtained the means to attend the tournaments within his reach, and to bestow handsome gifts on all heralds and minstrels.*

This period of his life was a fit preparation for the stirring scenes upon which he was soon to enter, and in which he was destined to act a part so conspicuous. It will here be necessary to suspend for awhile the narrative of the boy, in order to bring forward those important events which gave employment to the life of the man. Of these events, the first which affected the fortunes of Bertrand were the unhappy contests between the Count de Montfort and Charles de Blois for the succession to the duchy of Brittany, and which for long years divided that province into rival and hostile factions, and plunged it into all the horrors of civil war.

* Cuvelier, vv. 311, 536. *Chron. Anon.* ch. i. pp. 3, 4.

CHAPTER II.

State of Brittany. Rival pretensions of the Count de Montfort and Charles de Blois to the Duchy.

DURING the early part of the year 1341, John III., Duke of Brittany, surnamed The Good, was present with Philippe de Valois, as one of the great vassals of the crown of France, before Tournay, which was then besieged by Edward III., king of England. By the intervention of Jeanne de Valois, countess dowager of Hainault, sister of the king of France and mother-in-law of Edward III., a truce for a year was concluded between France and England; and, in consequence, the siege of Tournay was raised and the troops were withdrawn. Thereupon the Duke of Brittany set out for his duchy; but he sickened on the way, and died at Caen, in Normandy, on the 30th of April, 1341.*

As John left no children, his death was followed by unnumbered woes, not only to Brittany, but to France. His father, Arthur II., had been twice married. By his first marriage with Marie, daughter of Guy, Viscount de Limoges, he had two sons, the late Duke John, and Guy de Bretagne, Count de Penthiévre. The latter had married Jeanne d'Avan-

* *Les Chroniques de Sire Jean Froissart.* Par J. A. C. Buchon. (3 vols. 8vo.) Paris, 1853. Tom. i. liv. i. partie i. p. 127.

gour, by whom he had an only daughter, who married Charles de Châtillon, youngest son of the Count Guy de Blois and of Margaret, sister of Philippe de Valois, king of France. By his second marriage, with Yolande de Dreux, Arthur had one son, John de Bretagne, Count de Montfort.*

The succession to the vacant dukedom was claimed by Charles de Blois through his wife, by right of representation ;† and by the Count de Montfort as next of kin.‡ This claim of John de Montfort was apprehended by the late duke; and for that reason he had married his niece to Charles de Blois, in the hope that his uncle, the king of France, would aid him to maintain his rights against the pretensions of his rival.§

The fears entertained by the late Duke of Brittany were

* *Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile de Bretagne.* Par Dom. Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice. (2 vols. folio.) Paris, 1750. Tom. i. pp. 229, 242, 243.

† The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Sire Bertrand du Guesclin* adds, "*By the declared will of the late duke, with the assent of the barons, and even of the Count de Montfort himself;*" but that wants confirmation, as the will of the duke could not be found, and De Montfort declared, in the assertion of his claim to the duchy, that when the friends of Charles de Blois pressed the duke on his death-bed to make Charles his heir, he impatiently exclaimed: "*For God's sake, let me alone: I wish not to burden my soul.*"—*Mémoires pour servir de Preuves à l'Histoire de Bretagne*, par Morice. Paris, 1744. (3 vols. folio.) Tom. i. col. 1419. These Memoirs are commonly cited as *Actes de Bretagne.*

‡ Guillaume de St. André, ver. 125, who cites the Mosaic law with some triumph, as an answer to all who might call in question the title of the Count de Montfort. The poetical chronicle of Guil. de St. André, under the title, *Histoire de Jean IV., dit le Conquérant, depuis l'an* 1341 *jusqu'à l'an*, 1381, has been published by Morice, in *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. ii. col. 306; and by Charrière, with the title, *C'est le Livre du Bon Jehan, Duc de Bretaigne*, as an Appendix to the second volume of his edition of Cuvelier.

§ Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 128.

speedily realized ; for the Count de Montfort, as soon as he became aware of the death of his brother, went to the town of Nantes, where, by his influence over the citizens, he was acknowledged as their lord, and they did him homage and fealty as Duke of Brittany.

When he had taken the oaths of the citizens of Nantes and of the adjoining country, after mature deliberation with his countess, Jeanne, sister of Count Louis of Flanders, he determined to hold a court and submit his pretensions to a more numerous and influential assembly. Accordingly, he sent an invitation to the barons and knights of Brittany, to the councils of the cities and towns, and to all whom he desired should be present, to make their oaths of fealty to him as their rightful sovereign.

While awaiting the time fixed for the meeting of the assembly, the Count de Montfort, with a number of men-at-arms, went to the city of Limoges, in order to take possession of the treasures of the late Duke of Brittany, which were kept there. He entered the city in great pomp, and was well received by the clergy and citizens, who all did him homage. The treasures were delivered up to him without hesitation ; and after spending some days there, and gaining the good-will of the citizens by presents and promises, he returned to Nantes, to be ready before the meeting of the assembly, for which great preparation had been made.

When the day appointed for the meeting had arrived, and no one of rank or position appeared in obedience to the summons but a single knight, Sir Hervey de Léon, great was the surprise, rage, and mortification of the Count de Montfort. Notwithstanding his anger against those who had treated his invitation with contempt, he feasted the citizens of Nantes and the people of the neighbourhood for three days, and immediately thereafter applied himself with great activity to collect soldiers, both horse and foot, in order to

maintain his title by arms, in case of need, and to punish the rebels against his authority. He was assisted by all those present, the clergy, knights, and citizens; and he retained in his service and paid liberally whoever offered themselves, whether noble or ignoble, until he had drawn together from different countries a large force of cavalry and infantry.*

While the Count de Montfort was traversing the province of Brittany, taking towns and castles and gaining adherents to his cause, Charles de Blois was entirely inactive, only depending on the aid which he expected to receive from his uncle, the king of France. The Count de Montfort having collected a large force, determined to make an attack upon Brest, a strongly fortified castle situated on the sea-coast, and commanded by a valiant knight, Sir Gautier de Clisson, a cousin of Oliver, Lord of Clisson. The castle was vigorously assailed, but it was as stoutly defended, and all propositions of surrender were indignantly rejected by the brave castellan. The assault was continued for several days with doubtful success, until Sir Gautier de Clisson was mortally wounded at the barriers of the castle. The garrison, notwithstanding the loss of their leader, made a gallant defence of the walls, which were approached by means of strong planks thrown across the ditches surrounding the castle. The besieged resisted this mode of attack by casting stones, fire, and vessels full of quick-lime upon the assailants; but at length the garrison surrendered, upon the promise of pardon and the assurance of safety to their persons and property.

After he had taken the castle and placed in command of it a castellan of his own party, the Count de Montfort laid siege to the town of Rennes, which was then commanded

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 128, 129.

by Sir Henry de Spinefort.* That officer, while the Count de Montfort was encamped near the town, made a sally about daylight with two hundred men to beat up the quarters of the besiegers; but the attack was doubly unfortunate, as it resulted not only in the capture of the knight by the forces of the count, but it was the means by which the latter got possession of the town; for, as Sir Henry de Spinefort was very popular among the commonalty of Rennes, the count threatened to hang him before the gates if the town was not surrendered forthwith. This threat caused great dissension among the different classes in the town. The commonalty, who greatly loved their captain, and who were badly supplied with provisions for a siege, at once acceded to the demand; but the wealthier citizens, who were well provided, refused their assent, and assembled with their partisans, to the number of two thousand, to resist the surrender of the town. Upon this the commonalty assailed them, at first with opprobrious epithets, and at length with blows, by which they were driven from their ground and a number of them slain. The common people then opened the gates and surrendered the city to the Count de Montfort, and the whole body of citizens, great and small, did him homage and fealty, and recognised him as their lord.

The Count de Montfort was equally successful in gaining many other important places. He laid siege to Hennebon, situated at the mouth of the river Blavet, one of the best fortified towns in Brittany; but as he could not obtain possession of it by force, he accomplished his object by fraud. In this he was aided by Sir Henry de Spinefort, whose brother Oliver was governor of the town and castle. Under

* *Hist. de Bretagne*, by Morice; tom. i. p. 247. Froissart calls him Pennefort, liv. i. part i. p. 130.

the pretence that he still belonged to the party of Charles de Blois, Sir Henry de Spinefort gained admission within the gates with a well-armed force of six hundred men, took his brother prisoner, and by that means got possession of the town and castle. The castles of Auray and Guy-la-Foret, and the towns of Vannes and Craais, also fell into the hands of the count by force or stratagem. Near the last-mentioned town he quartered his troops, by whom great devastations were committed throughout the open country—they carrying away everything "that was not too hot or too heavy." *

The Count de Montfort, still taking advantage of the supineness of his rival, overran and subdued the whole province, and had himself proclaimed everywhere Duke of Brittany. After placing garrisons in the towns and fortresses, he went to the coast and embarked from the village of Coredon for England. On his arrival he first went to Windsor, where he found Edward III., and offered to do him homage for the duchy of Brittany, and hold it of him as his lord against the king of France and all other persons. Edward was rejoiced at the offer, for he at once perceived that the possession of Brittany as a fief would greatly aid him in his meditated contest with Philip, and give him the most convenient entrance into the kingdom of France, although the claim of the Count de Montfort to the duchy of Brittany was just the opposite of that which the English monarch had set up to the crown of France. Edward therefore readily accepted the offer of the Count de Montfort, and received his homage for the duchy.†

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 129—133.

† Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 133. Some doubts exist in relation to this act of homage, as done *at that time;* but Froissart relates it with much circumstantiality; and Du Tillet assigns that as the reason why the count was summoned by the king of France to appear before the

When Charles de Blois, who regarded himself, in right of his wife, as the lawful inheritor of the duchy of Brittany, was informed in what manner the Count de Montfort had overrun the whole province, and that he had placed garrisons in the towns and fortresses, he made a formal complaint against him to his uncle, the king of France. Upon this, King Philip took counsel of the twelve peers what course he should pursue; and by their advice he summoned the Count de Montfort to appear at Paris on a day fixed, to answer the charges against him. The count at first hesitated whether he would obey the summons, but at length he determined to go; and, with a force of more than four hundred horse, he went to Paris, where the king of France, the twelve peers, and a large number of barons, with Charles de Blois, were ready to receive him. The Count de Montfort pleaded his cause with much spirit before the parliament, and denied the charge alleged against him by the king of France, that he had done homage to the king of England for the duchy of Brittany. After this, he was ordered by the king of France to remain at his quarters, in the city of Paris, for fifteen days, until the peers and barons could adjudge the process. To this he assented; but apprehending that the judgment would be against him, and fearing lest he might be detained as a prisoner until he had delivered up the towns and castles which he possessed in Brittany, he mounted his horse, and, attended by a small retinue, left the city of Paris with such secrecy, that he had reached the province of Brit-

twelve peers, at Paris.—*Recueil des Traictez d'entre les Roys de France & d'Angleterre*, p. 52, *verso*. Rymer mentions a treaty between Edward III. and the Count de Montfort, and a conditional gift to the latter of the earldom of Richmond; but the paper is dated the 24th of September, 1341, which is subsequent to the action of the parliament at Conflans.—*Fœdera, Conventiones, Litteræ*, &c., cura Thomæ Rymer. Londini, 1821. Vol. ii. part ii. p. 1176.

tany before the king knew of his departure. He first went to Nantes, where he had left the countess; and as war now seemed inevitable, he visited his fortresses, strengthened the garrisons, and placed at their head trusty captains, with provisions sufficient for a protracted siege.*

The king of France was much annoyed at the flight of the Count de Montfort, of which he foresaw all the consequences; but no allusion was made to it in the proceedings of the parliament. Both parties were heard in full before that body. It was represented on the part of the Count de Montfort, that he was the nearest relative to John III., late Duke of Brittany, and, consequently, his lawful heir: that the Countess of Penthiévre, wife of Charles de Blois, being only the niece, was more remote by a degree: that Brittany was subjected to the general custom of the kingdom of France, and therefore the duchies, counties, and baronies could not descend to females, while there were males in being; and to sustain these positions, authorities were cited from the divine, natural, and moral law, and the law of reason: from the civil law, the digest and code: from the feudal and canon law: from the customary law of France and the decisions of the courts.

To this argument it was replied, on the part of Charles de Blois, that by the custom of Brittany, the eldest succeeded to all fiefs: that if the eldest died without issue, the rights of the eldest devolved on the second brother: that the children of the eldest, whether males or females, represented their parents, to the exclusion of uncles: and that this custom obtained not only in Brittany, but in Anjou, Maine, Touraine, Berry, and other provinces. The court, after a full hearing of the arguments on both sides, rendered their decree at Conflans, on the 7th of

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 134, 135.

September, 1341, that "the request of Charles be admitted, and the request of the count be not admitted."*

With this decree in his favour, and with the aid of the Duke of Normandy, eldest son of the king of France, a large number of princes of the blood and other nobles, with their retainers, Charles de Blois set out from Paris to recover the province of Brittany from the possession of his rival. On reaching the confines of that province, the forces under the Duke of Normandy amounted to five thousand heavy armed soldiers and three thousand Genoese, under the command of Antonio Doria and Charles Grimaldi, together with a large body of light armed troops. With these the duke laid siege to Chateauceaux, a very strong castle situated upon the river Loire. This castle was regarded as the key of Brittany on that side. It was well supplied with provisions, and defended by a stronge force of men-at-arms. At this siege the Duke of Normandy lost a large number of men, especially of Genoese, who, in order to make a show of valour at the commencement of their term of service, rashly exposed themselves to danger; and for some days no progress was made in the siege, for the garrison, with equal skill and bravery, successfully resisted the assaults at every point. The besiegers, seeing that by the discharge of arrows and other missiles they were exposing themselves to danger without any adequate result, collected a quantity of fascines and thick planks, for the purpose of filling up the moats of the castle, which enabled them to make their approaches to the walls. The garrison resisted this mode of attack by shooting arrows at the besiegers, and throwing down quantities of quick-lime and firebrands upon

* *Extrait de l'Escrit de Jean de Montfort contre Charles de Blois*, in *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. i. col. 1415; and *Arrest de Conflans*, ibid. col. 1421.

them. At length the assailants erected *cats*,* to protect themselves from the missiles thrown from above, and thus under cover they were enabled to pierce the walls. The besieged, finding that they could no longer successfully resist the attack, surrendered the castle, to the great joy of the French leaders, who regarded it as an auspicious commencement of their enterprise.†

After the surrender of Chateauceaux the Duke of Normandy and Charles de Blois attacked Quonquefon, a town situated about five leagues from Nantes, which after a short resistance was taken, pillaged, and set on fire, and the inhabitants were put to the sword. They then besieged the city of Nantes, and "pitched their tents and pavilions around it, so handsomely and in such order as the French know well how to do." The Count de Montfort, who then commanded in the town, defended it with his accustomed bravery, but without his usual good fortune: for the citizens, fearing that the town could not withstand the attack of the besiegers, and that it would be delivered up to pillage, treacherously opened their gates to the Duke of Normandy, and the Count de Montfort was taken prisoner. From Nantes the count was sent to Paris, and confined in the tower of the Louvre.‡

* Joinville, in his "Memoirs of St. Louis," says:—"The king determined to have a causeway made to enable him to pass over to the Saracens; and to guard those employed on it, he had built two beffrois, called *chas—chateils;*" and Du Cange, in his note to the above passage, observes, that "the *cat* was properly a machine made in the form of a covered gallery, which was fastened to the walls to afford shelter to the sappers."—Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," pp. 402, 403. Catti ergo sunt vineæ, sive plutei, sub quibus miles in morem felis, quem *cattum* vulgo dicimus, in subsessis aut insidiis latent.—Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Catus.*

† Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 136.

‡ Froissart asserts that the Count de Montfort died in prison, liv. i.

part i. p. 138. In this he was clearly mistaken. Du Tillet says that, under one of the articles of a treaty between the kings of France and England, he was set at liberty, the 1st of September, 1343, on certain conditions, and among others, that he was not to return to Brittany, which he did not observe; that he laid siege to Quimpercorentin, but was obliged to raise the siege; and that he died soon after.—*Recueil des Traictez*, &c., p. 54, *verso;* and *Inventaire*, p. 62, *verso.* Guil. de St. André, vv. 275, 344, says that he escaped from the Louvre, disguised as a poor merchant, went into England, where he made a treaty with the English, and shortly afterwards died.

CHAPTER III.

Continuation of the affairs of Brittany. The Countess de Montfort. Edward III. and the Countess of Salisbury. Lord Robert d'Artois.

THE imprisonment of the Count de Montfort gave no advantage to his enemies, and brought no despondency to his friends, for the armour which he could no longer wear, and the sword which he could no longer wield, were at once assumed by Jeanne, his heroic countess, who gave no time to tears, and who showed how far the chivalrous manners of the times had extended even to the gentler sex. The countess was at the town of Rennes when she first heard of the capture of her husband, and though grieved and angry, she was not cast down, but she employed at once every means in her power to revive the drooping spirits of her friends and soldiers: exhibiting to them her little son John, and exhorting them not to be dismayed at the loss of their lord; that he was but a single man; that her little son, with God's blessing, would be their deliverer; and that she would share with them her wealth, and provide for them another leader, who would support and govern them.

In like manner she went to her other towns and fortresses, offering to every one words of encouragement and hope; reinforcing the garrisons, and storing them with all necessary arms and provisions. But the brave countess was not

destined to any long repose by her now vigilant adversary Charles de Blois, who, following up the advantages which he supposed had been gained by the captivity of the Count de Montfort, laid siege to the town of Rennes, and took it after a short resistance. He then proceeded to besiege Hennebon on the south-west coast of Brittany, a large and strong castle, into which the countess had thrown herself, with a considerable body of archers and men-at-arms.*

It was in the defence of this fortress that the Countess de Montfort exhibited those traits of heroism and military skill which excited even the admiration of her enemies, and well justified the remark which Froissart loved to repeat, that "she had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion." When Charles de Blois approached the town, several skirmishes took place between the besieged and the besiegers, in which the former had the advantage; but early on the third day a well concerted attack was made at the barriers, which was bravely met by the garrison, who defended themselves so successfully, that the assailants at the hour of midday were forced to retreat, carrying off a number of their wounded comrades and leaving many dead ones behind them on the field.

This partial success of the besieged so irritated the leaders on the opposite side, that they immediately brought their men back to the assault, which was renewed with greater impetuosity than before, and resisted with equal obstinacy by the garrison. In the midst of the contest the countess, mounted upon a war-horse in full armour, rode from street to street throughout the town, and called upon the men to make a stout defence, ordering the women, matrons, maidens, and others, to bring stones to the battlements, bombards,† and pots of quick-lime to throw down upon the assailants.

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 138, 147, 149.

† There were various kinds of machines for throwing stones in use

The countess, finding that the assault still continued, dismounted from her horse and ascended a tower, from whence she could better discern the dispositions of the enemy, and observe at the same time how her own soldiers sustained themselves in the conflict. After a moment's glance at the field before her, she suddenly determined upon a daring exploit, which she as bravely executed. She had observed that the besiegers—leaders and men—had left their tents, and gone to join in the assault. Descending from her position she remounted her horse, and with three hundred men-at-arms, like herself on horseback, she passed through a gate which had not been attacked, rode to the camp of Charles de Blois, then only guarded by some army-boys and servants, and set all the tents and lodges on fire. When the besiegers saw their tents in flames, they all withdrew immediately from the assault to oppose this unexpected danger. The countess having accomplished her object, discovered that she could not re-enter the town without much peril; she thereupon quickly assembled her forces and rode to a neighbouring castle,* which was situated about three leagues from Hennebon, with the loss of a few followers who were not as well mounted as the rest.

After remaining five days in the castle where she had sought refuge, and fearing the effects which her absence might occasion among her adherents in the town she had left, she set out about midnight with five hundred men armed and well mounted, appeared about sunrise within sight of the enemy, and ordering the gates of the castle of

during the 14th century, from the portable bombard, or *tormentum*, here referred to, to the heavy engine which cast immense stones by the use of gunpowder. Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Bombarda.*

* Froissart says the castle of Brest. It was more probably Auray, as stated by Morice, in *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 256; for Brest is much further from Hennebon than the distance mentioned in the text.

Hennebon to be opened, she entered the fortress amidst the sounding of trumpets and drums,* to the great joy of her adherents, and the utter amazement of her enemies.

When Charles de Blois at length found that the town could not be carried by assault, he determined to make an effort to take it by a regular siege; and accordingly, dividing his army, he left a portion of it under Lord Louis of Spain to carry on the siege, while he drew off the other part with him to attack the castle of Auray. The Lord Louis, impatient under a mere blockade, sent immediately for twelve large military engines which had been left at Rennes, to batter down the walls of the town of Hennebon. Under these powerful machines the walls began to crumble, and the inhabitants were quickly disposed to listen openly to propositions for a surrender; but the countess, entertaining suspicions of the good faith of the bishop, Guy de Léon, who took an active part in the matter, and who had been treating secretly for the surrender of the town with his nephew Sir Hervey de Léon, a distinguished leader of the opposite side, begged the Breton lords, for the love of Heaven, not to desert her then, for she would receive reinforcements within three days.

This assistance the countess had been daily expecting from England, under the command of Sir Amauri de Clisson and "the gentle knight," Sir Walter Manny; but they had been kept at sea for many weeks by adverse winds. The bishop, continuing his efforts, suggested so many reasons for a surrender to the Breton lords, that they were in great tribulation during the night. On the next day he brought

* *Nacaires* is the word used by Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 151. Du Cange, on the authority of Pietro de la Valle, says, that "there is a sort of drum called by this name, which is used by the German cavalry, and which we commonly call tymbals."—Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," p. 389 (note); and Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Nacara.*

nearly all of them to follow his counsel, and Sir Hervey de Léon had already made his appearance near the walls for the purpose of learning the decision of the inhabitants, when the countess, looking in the direction of the sea, through a window of the castle, joyously exclaimed: "I see the succour which I have so much desired!" By this timely aid Hennebon was saved, and with the assistance of her English auxiliaries the countess was not only able to raise the siege, but to take the field against her opponent on terms of greater equality.*

This war of the succession to the duchy of Brittany, like all civil wars, was fierce and cruel. Its history for the most part is a painful record of towns and castles taken and retaken, of hamlets and villages pillaged, of churches burnt, of men, women, and children slain without mercy; and its sad details fully justified the pathetic remark of William de St. André, that "the cemeteries were crowded with the dead, widows and orphans everywhere encumbered the highway, and a black robe was the common livery."†

Upon a temporary cessation of hostilities, towards the close of the year 1342, the Countess de Montfort crossed over to England for the purpose of obtaining further aid from Edward III. The young king of England was then in his thirtieth year. He had freed himself from the pernicious influences of a wicked and erring mother, and commenced a new reign, under auspices all the brighter because the past had been humiliating and base. Edward had every advan-

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 149, 152.

† "Les cimeters en sont boçuz;
Femmes vueves et orffelins
Emconbroint forment les chemins;
Robe noire estoit bien portée
C'estoit bien commune livrée."
—*Guil. de St. André*, ver. 368.

tage of person and manners to gain esteem and command respect, and at an early age he had married Philippa of Hainault, a young woman of sense and virtue, who had already given him the assurance that his throne would never need the props of a numerous and promising offspring. Though happily married, he was not unsusceptible of the softer emotions, and he suffered himself to be seduced from the path of rectitude and virtue by the graces and attractions of one of his fair subjects, the celebrated Countess of Salisbury.*

During the early part of the same season, while Edward III. was hastening with a numerous army to repel a sudden invasion of the Scots in the north of England, he was informed that David, king of Scotland, was then besieging Wark Castle, on the borders of Northumberland. This castle, in the absence of her husband, had been gallantly defended for two days by the Countess of Salisbury, when the timely arrival of the king of England forced the Scots to raise the siege and retreat to their own country. Edward, upon finding that with all his haste his enemies had escaped him, lodged his troops in the neighbourhood of the castle, and after disarming himself, took with him ten or twelve knights to pay a visit to the countess, whom he had not seen since her marriage, and to compliment her on the successful defence of the castle.

As soon as the countess was informed of the approach of the king, she ordered all the gates of the castle to be thrown

* Barnes, who seems to regard himself as specially charged with preserving the reputation of Edward III., asserts with very self-complaisant dogmatism that there is no foundation for the alleged attachment of Edward to the Countess of Salisbury. He does show that Joan Plantagenet was never married to the Earl of Salisbury; but he does not prove, what is only material to the issue, that Edward may not have loved the fair Catherine Grandison, who was the wife of William Earl of Salisbury. — *Hist. of Edward III.*, by Joshua Barnes. (Folio.) London, 1688, p. 251.

open, and she came out herself to meet Edward, "so richly clothed and adorned that every one marvelled, for no one could abstain from looking at her and admiring the nobleness of the lady, her great beauty, and her gracious mien." On approaching the king she made a profound obeisance, thanked him for his kindness, and the succour which he had brought her. She then conducted him into the castle, where she designed to entertain and honour him, "as she knew very well how to do." Every one beheld her with admiration, and the king could not refrain from looking at her, as he thought he had never before seen one so noble or so fair. "At that moment," says the chronicler, "he was struck to the heart by a spark of fine love, which lasted for a long time."

The king and countess entered the castle together, and the countess led him first into the hall and then into his chamber, which had been specially prepared for his reception. During the whole interview the king looked at the lady with such fixed attention that she became disconcerted and cast down. When he had regarded her for some time he went to a window for relief, and seemed lost in thought. The countess then returned to her other guests, and saluted the lords and knights appropriately, each one according to his rank. She then ordered dinner to be prepared, and at the proper time the tables to be laid and the hall to be decorated.

When she had given all her orders and done everything necessary, she went to the chamber of the king, whom she found still in deep thought, to whom, with joyous face, she said :—

"Dear Sire, why do you think so deeply? It does not become you, as it seems to me, to ponder so ; but you should rather rejoice and make good cheer, since you have chased away your enemies, who did not dare to await you, and leave thinking to others."

"Ha! dear lady," replied the king, "know that since I came here I have had a vision, and I cannot refrain from musing about it. I am unable to tell what may come of it, but I cannot tear it from my heart."

"Dear Sire," rejoined the countess, "you ought always to make good cheer, so as to comfort your people, and give up thinking and musing. God, until now, has so well aided you in all your affairs, and given you such great favour, that you are the most dreaded and honoured prince in Christendom; and if the king of Scotland has angered you, whenever you will it can be amended, as you have done heretofore. So give up your musing, and come into the hall with your knights, for dinner will soon be ready."

"Ha! my dear lady," answered the king, "something else troubles me, and lies nearer my heart than what you imagine; for surely the pleasing manners, the perfect sense, the great nobleness, the grace and fine beauty which I have seen and found in you, have so surprised and possessed me, that I must be loved of you, and no refusal can take it from me."

"Ha! very dear Sire," replied the high-spirited woman, "do not mock or tempt me. I cannot believe what you say is true, or that so noble and gentle a prince as you are would seek to dishonour me and my husband, a valiant knight who has served you faithfully, and who now lies in prison on your account.* Surely, in such a case, you would be little esteemed, and be none the better for it. Surely such a thought never came into my heart, and I trust in God it never will, for any man born: and if it did, you ought yourself to blame me, and not blame me only, but punish my body and dismember it, as an example to others to be loyal to their husbands."

* The earl was taken prisoner in the year 1340, by the garrison of Lille, in Flanders, and exchanged during this season for the Earl of Moray.—Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 95 and 147.

With these words the countess left the king greatly disconcerted, and went into the hall to hasten dinner. She then returned to the king, bringing with her some of his knights; and on entering his chamber she said to him:—

"Sire, come to the hall; your knights are waiting for you to wash; for they have fasted too long already, and so have you."

The king then left the chamber, and followed his hostess into the hall, where he washed, and then seated himself at dinner with his knights and hostess; but he ate little, "as something besides eating and drinking then occupied him." During the dinner he was absorbed in thought, and "at times, when he dared to regard the lady and her demeanour, he threw his eyes on that side."

The king remained at the castle the rest of the day, but he continued thoughtful and restless during the whole time; for both honour and probity forbade him to carry out a purpose which would dishonour so noble a lady as his hostess and so loyal a knight as her husband; while love, on the other hand, constrained him to such a degree that it conquered both honour and probity. This struggle continued during the rest of the day and night. The next morning he rose early, and ordered his forces to prepare for pursuing the Scots. On taking leave of the countess, he said:—

"My dear lady, to God I commend you till my return; and I beg that you will think of it, and give me a different answer from what you have said."

"Dear Sire," replied the countess, "may the Glorious Father guide you, and take from you all vile and dishonourable thoughts; for I am now prepared, and always will be, to serve you, to your honour and to mine."*

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 145, 146. This episode of Edward and the Countess of Salisbury may or may not be true. It is, however, true to the manners of the times; and one is unwilling to attribute to

Although occupied with the most important affairs at home and on the continent, when the Countess de Montfort came to ask his aid in her contest with Charles de Blois, Edward III. was still devoted to a passionate attachment for the Countess of Salisbury, in whose honour he had just ordered a tournament to be proclaimed at London, and he had invited the Countess de Montfort to be present, offering her the material aid which was the object of her visit.

To this grand pageant, one of the greatest of that or any other time, the king of England had invited the knights and squires from Flanders, Hainault, Brabant, and even from France, with a safe conduct to come and go: and he had also summoned the lords, barons, knights, and squires, and "the fair ladies," from all parts of his kingdom to attend it. He specially commanded the Earl of Salisbury to require the presence of his countess, with such ladies as she desired to bring with her. The earl readily consented, for he dreamed of nothing improper in the purposes of the king; but the countess, although she could not refuse, obeyed the order with reluctance, for she well knew what it meant; and though she dared not to make it known to her husband, she firmly resolved, as she said, "to turn away the mind of the king from such thoughts."

At this tournament were present Count William of Hainault, Sir John of Hainault, his uncle, and a great number of the barons and knights of that country. There were, besides, twelve earls, eight hundred knights, and five hundred ladies of high rank. The jousts and dances continued for the space of fifteen days. The ladies were all dressed in their richest attire, according to their estate, except the

mere invention a charming passage in the work of the great chronicler, who ought to have been thoroughly acquainted with the persons and incidents of his own times.

Countess of Salisbury, who was dressed in the simplest manner; for she desired that "the king should not give himself up too much to regard her, as she had neither the will nor thought to obey him in any vile act which could be turned to the dishonour of herself or her husband."*

Edward, immediately after the conclusion of the great tournament, set himself to perform the promise which he had made to the Countess de Montfort, and he accordingly gave her a force of four thousand men-at-arms and six thousand archers, under the charge of Lord Robert d'Artois, a very notable man of that period, who, by his extraordinary abilities, his energy and address, had acquired a controlling influence over the counsels of Edward, which he directed to objects the most pernicious, both to England and to France. It was chiefly by his advice that Edward was persuaded to press his very doubtful claim against Philippe de Valois to the crown of France, which resulted in a bloody war between the two countries, that lasted not only throughout the long reign of Edward III., but, after a temporary lull, under his two immediate successors; it was revived with bitter hostility in the following century, during the brilliant administration of Henry V., and it gave rise to a deep-rooted national antipathy, which has been kept alive through successive generations from that day to this.

Robert d'Artois, Lord of Beaumont-le-Roger, was of royal blood, and connected with the greatest families in the kingdom of France. He was the son of Philippe d'Artois, Lord of Couches, who died before his father, leaving Robert and other children under age. Upon the death of the Count d'Artois, Matilda, Countess of Burgundy, aunt of Philippe, claimed the county as the next of kin to her brother, while Robert claimed it by right of representation.

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 164.

Philippe le Bel, king of France—two of whose sons, Philippe le Long and Charles le Bel, were married respectively to Jeanne and Blanche, the daughters of Matilda—in the year 1309, adjudged the fief to the Countess of Burgundy; and the decree was confirmed in the year 1318 by Philippe le Long, who had married Jeanne, the eldest of the daughters.*

Robert d'Artois, who conceived himself unjustly despoiled of his hereditary rights by these decrees, renewed his pretensions to the county of Artois soon after the accession of Philippe de Valois, whom he had aided more effectually by his energy and eloquence than any other French noble against the claims of Edward III., both in the matter of the regency and in the succession to the crown. Robert, apart from his more general interest in the cause of Philippe, whose sister he had married, had a special interest in maintaining the authority of the *Salic Law*, as he hoped that his own claim to one of the great fiefs of the crown would be decided by the precedent. Accordingly, in the year 1329, he obtained the assent of the king of France to have the proceedings revived, and commissioners were appointed to hear the testimony which Lord Robert wished to introduce. After the examination of a number of witnesses, the proceedings were suspended in consequence of the deaths of Matilda, Countess d'Artois, and her daughter Jeanne, widow of Philippe le Long, when the county was claimed by the daughter of the latter, who had married the Duke of Burgundy. To maintain his rights against this new claimant, Robert d'Artois exhibited certain papers which he alleged

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 47. *Hist. de Bretagne*, by Morice. Tom. i. p. 239. Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez*, &c., p. 46, *verso*. Rapin's "Hist. of England." (Folio.) Vol. i. p. 416. Where may be seen the genealogy of the family of Artois from Louis VIII., king of France.

had been miraculously found; but on examination they proved to have been forged, and in consequence the process was decided against him. Immediately after the discovery of the fraud, Lord Robert fled in confusion from the kingdom, leaving behind his wretched accomplice, a girl of Artois, named Jeanne de Divion, who, upon confession of the forgery, was tried, condemned, and publicly burnt at Paris.*

Lord Robert d'Artois, after his disgrace, took refuge with his kinsman the Duke of Brabant, at Brussels, and he refused to notice the several citations of the peers of France, requiring him to appear and answer the offences charged against him. After the third summons all his estates were confiscated by a decree of the 19th of March, 1332, and he was banished from the kingdom. The greatness of his fall, and the severity of his punishment at the hands of a brother-in-law, to whose service he had so entirely devoted himself, drove Lord Robert almost to frenzy; and certain menacing expressions which he imprudently let fall in his anger against Philippe de Valois so incensed that monarch, that the latter pursued him ever afterwards with the most unrelenting hostility, drove him successively from the courts of the Duke of Brabant and the Count de Namur, and forced him to seek refuge with Edward III. of England.†

The confiscation of his estates, and the imprisonment of his wife and children under a suspicion of sorcery,‡ left to a

* *Continuator Chronici Guillelmi de Nangiaco*, sub annis 1331 and 1332, pp. 124, 126. The Latin chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis and his continuators—first published by Luc d'Achery in his *Spicilegium*, tom. xi. p. 405, of the first edition, and tom. iii. p. i. of the second—has been revised and republished by H. Gérard, in 2 vols. 8vo. Paris, 1843.

† "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 129, 132. Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 47.

‡ *Quarumdam invultationum suspecta.*—"Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 142. As to the meaning of *invultationum*, see Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Invultor* and *Vultivoli*.

violent and bad man, like Robert d'Artois, nothing but vengeance; and, although he did not live to witness the full effects of his resentment, he made his persecutor, Philippe de Valois, and his successors to the fourth generation, undergo in its worst forms the evils of war, famine, and pestilence, and he forced the people of France to endure every species of misery that a nation could suffer for more than a hundred years.

Edward III., having passed through the perils of a long minority, was probably little disposed at first to press his claims to the crown of France by arms, as he might well have hesitated to measure his forces with the colossal power of his competitor. In order, therefore, to urge him to a speedy decision, Lord Robert d'Artois is said to have resorted to an expedient singularly illustrative of the rude manners of the times.

One day, towards the close of September, "when the gay birds had lost their song, when the grapes were ripe and the vines began to dry up, when the trees were casting off their foliage, and the leaves covered the highway," Lord Robert d'Artois went out to take the diversion of hawking. In flying a favourite bird on the river he took a heron, which, after a moment's reflection, he resolved to turn to a profitable account as an instrument of his long-cherished vengeance against his own country. He thereupon immediately carried it to his house in London, had it plucked, stuffed, and roasted; and then, attended by two performers on the cymbal and a guitar player, he placed the bird between two silver dishes in the hands of two singing girls, and took it to the palace of the king of England, where the young monarch, free from ambitious aspirations, was seated at table in the midst of his council, "with his head inclined to one side, and only absorbed in thoughts of love."*

* The events here mentioned have been taken from a very curious old

Entering with his attendants into the presence of Edward III., Lord Robert d'Artois first addressed the knights assembled near the king, and invited them to make on the heron vows worthy of their valour, as it was the vilest of birds and the most timid, for it was afraid of its own shadow; and for that reason, he said, he had brought it as a worthy offering to their king, who had tamely submitted to the surrender of his just rights to the crown of France.

Edward, touched to the quick at this bold taunt of his guest, at first trembled with anger; but soon collecting himself, he swore that he would pass the sea before the expiration of a month, and await his enemy Philippe de Valois, if he had but one man against ten. Lord Robert smiled with malicious pleasure at the successful result of his experiment, and thereupon he made a vow himself to avenge his own great wrongs which he had received at the hands of Philippe de Valois, whom he had so loyally served. He then ordered his minstrels to strike up. The musicians accompanied with their instruments the voices of the girls, who sang a *chanson* commencing—"*I go to the green fields, for there love invites me.*"* Lord Robert then crossed the hall, and presented the dish to the Earl of Salisbury, who first requested a lady sitting near him to close one of his eyes, and then he took an oath that he would not open that eye until he had entered France to avenge the wrongs of his master, and engaged the army of Philippe de Valois in a pitched battle.

In like manner the heron was presented to the Earls of Derby and Suffolk, Lord de Fauquemont, a mercenary ad-

poem, in the French of the 14th century, entitled *Veus du Hairon* (Vœu du Héron), published by St. Palaye in his *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie.* Tom. ii. p. 95, of the edition by Nodier.

* "*Je vois à la verdure, car amours le m'aprent.*"
—Page 101.

venturer then present at the court of Edward, and to Lord de Beaumont, uncle of the queen of England, who severally made vows that they would aid Edward to maintain his rights with all their power. It was then presented to Philippa the queen, whose fearful vow made the whole assembly shudder; and the king, struck with horror at her oath,* ordered Lord Robert to proceed no further.†

When Edward III., at the instigation of Lord Robert d'Artois, had resolved to press his claims to the crown of France, he formed alliances with the Count of Hainault and other princes of the Low Countries, and with Jacob von Artevelde, the leader of the revolted Flemings, and attempted to invade France on the side of Flanders. Nothing, however, came of all his preparation and expense, in the year 1341,

* The curious and learned reader may translate for himself the vow of the queen, which is here transcribed from the original poem :—

" Adonc dist la roine, je sais bien que pièch a,
Que sui grosse d'enfant, que mon corps senti l'a,.....
Et je voue et prometh à Dieu qui me crea, ...
Que ja li fruis de moi de mon corps n'istera,
Si m'en arès menée où païs par dela
Pour avanchier le veu que vo corps voué a ;
D'un grand coutel d'achier le miens corps s'ochira,
Serai m'asme perdue, et li fruis perira."

—*Veus du Hairon*, p. 110.

† Many, if not all, of the occurrences here mentioned may possibly have been drawn from the writer's imagination ; but, however exaggerated some of the incidents may be, they are not, on that account, the less true of the manners of that period. Froissart mentions about the same time a vow similar to that attributed in the poem to the Earl of Salisbury, as taken by several knights who accompanied the bishop of Lincoln to Valenciennes, in his embassy to William, Count of Hainault, in the year 1337. Liv. i. part i. pp. 57, 58. And Rymer mentions the Earl of Salisbury as one of those who went over with the bishop of Lincoln, and signed, with the bishop and the Earl of Huntingdon, the treaty made with the Count of Hainault on the 14th of May, 1337.—*Fœdera*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 970.

but a naval victory off Sluis, on the coast of Flanders, in which the French were defeated,* when the king of England was persuaded by his mother-in-law, the Countess of Hainault, to raise the siege of Tournay, and agree to a truce with Philippe de Valois for a year. It was therefore with pleasure that Edward watched the progress of the quarrel between the Count de Montfort and Charles de Blois; and as an alliance with any one holding the ports of Brittany would give him an easy entrance into France, he was quite willing to grant the succour which the Countess de Montfort came to seek.

* It is said that the king of France was kept in ignorance of this defeat, until his suspicions being excited by a chance expression of his buffoon, he inquired what it meant. "Sire," said the jester, "the English are cowards; they have not the courage to leap into the sea like the French and Normans."

CHAPTER IV

Death of Lord Robert d'Artois. Bertrand du Guesclin reappears. His adventure with the English knight. Edward III. renews the war with France. Sir Godefroy de Harcourt.

LORD ROBERT D'ARTOIS soon got ready to take command of the forces which had been entrusted to him by the king of England; and accompanied by the Countess de Monttort and the Earls of Salisbury, Suffolk, Pembroke, and Oxford, by Baron Stafford, by Lords Despencer and Bouchier, and many others, he embarked at Southampton for Brittany. The expedition, after having been delayed for some time by contrary winds, was proceeding with a favourable breeze towards its destination, when, in the afternoon, near the island of Guernsey, a large fleet of vessels was seen at a distance, which turned out to be a combined force of Spanish and Genoese, under the command of Lord Louis of Spain. The English immediately sounded their trumpets, put themselves in order for battle, ran up their pennons and streamers with the arms of St. George, and under full sail made towards their enemies. They had about forty vessels, great and small; but the largest of their ships was greatly inferior in size and strength to nine of those in the fleet of Lord Louis of Spain. Among these nine vessels were three galleys which towered above all the others, and which were

severally commanded by Lord Louis, Carlo Grimaldi, and Antonio Doria. When the ships approached each other, the Spaniards and Genoese began to shoot with their cross-bows with great effect, which discharge was returned with much spirit by the English archers; but when they came so near that the vessels touched, and the lords, barons, knights, and squires could use their lances and swords, the battle was fierce and bloody, for the shock was well sustained on both sides. On the part of the English, Lord Robert d'Artois approved himself the bravest knight; and the Countess de Montfort, in full armour, "was well worth a man, for she had the heart of a lion," and with a drawn sword she joined in the combat with great courage. On the other side, Lord Louis of Spain performed many gallant feats of arms, and the Spaniards and Genoese who were in the large galleys threw from a higher position javelins and heavy bars of iron, which greatly annoyed the English.

The engagement continued with doubtful success until the parties were separated by night, for it commenced very late, about vespers, and the night set in so dark that the combatants could with difficulty distinguish each other. Both sides withdrew and cast anchor, though they did not disarm, for they intended as soon as it was practicable to renew the fight; but a little before midnight there arose "a wind and tempest so dreadful, that there was no one in either party so courageous who did not wish himself safe on land." By this storm the hostile fleets were effectually separated. When the morning came, the English discovered that they had drifted a hundred leagues from the place of combat, and they entered a small port on the southern coast of Brittany, near Vannes; while the others, after they had been driven about for two days, found themselves on the coast of Navarre.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 166, 168.

The Countess de Montfort gained no material advantage from the English succours. A portion of the province of Brittany was wasted and plundered by the troops of Lord Robert d'Artois; Rennes was besieged, and Vannes taken; but the former was relieved, and the latter retaken by the forces of her rival. To add to her mortification and grief, Lord Robert, at the siege of Vannes, received a wound which he was unable to get cured by the surgeons of Brittany; and it caused his return to England, where he soon after terminated his restless and unhappy life.

The death of Lord Robert d'Artois, which occasioned great grief to the Countess de Montfort, excited the activity of a more powerful auxiliary in her cause; for when Edward III. was informed of his death, he swore that he would listen to no terms of peace until he had avenged it: that he would go himself into Brittany, and lay waste the country in such a manner that it would not recover from it for forty years. He thereupon made immediately great preparation of men and ships, and in the space of a month he set sail from England and reached a port in Brittany, near Vannes; but with all his preparation, the English monarch could accomplish nothing which justified his confident boast. He successively besieged the city of Vannes, Rennes,* and Nantes, without being able to take either of them; and the only conquest which he made was the town of Dinan, a place not regularly fortified, and only defended by a palisade.

Upon the arrival of a large body of French troops under the command of the Duke of Normandy, Edward III. was compelled to collect his forces and provide for his own safety; for, including those of the Countess de Montfort, he could only muster about twenty-five hundred men-at-arms,

* At the siege of Rennes, the name of Bertrand du Guesclin occurs for the first time in Froissart, as one of the squires who took part in the defence of the town.—Liv. i. part i. p. 176.

six thousand archers, and four thousand other troops, while those under the Duke of Normandy were four times more numerous. To add to the danger of his situation, the English monarch was reduced to the want of provisions, and subjected to many losses and annoyances arising from the inclemency of the weather. From this dilemma, and the probable capture of himself and his army, he was saved by the intervention of Pope Clement VI., who, through his legates, concluded, on the 19th of January, 1343, a truce between the contending parties, to continue for three years.*

While these important events were passing in the province of Brittany, Bertrand du Guesclin had grown up to manhood, and he had been neither an unconcerned nor idle spectator of them; for it was not in his nature to be quiet, while such stirring scenes were transacting around him. He had early made up his mind as to the rightful claimant of the duchy, and to that decision he adhered with such fidelity and constancy, that no bribe could ever seduce or terror overawe him. As soon therefore as he felt assured that Charles de Blois had the legal right to the province of Brittany, he began to collect troops for his service, until at length he had assembled around him sixty followers. With these he seized upon every occasion to annoy the opposite party; and he swore that he would always cheerfully serve Charles de Blois, and that he would injure the Count de Montfort to the full extent of his ability. During the day he kept concealed with his men in the forests, traversed the country at night, and lost no occasion of striking a blow at the enemy, whenever chance threw them in his way. He shared with his companions

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 171, 177. Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez*, &c., p. 53, *verso;* and *Inventaire*, p. 62, *verso.* Raynaldi, *Annal. Eccles.* 1343, § 24. Rymer, vol. ii. part ii. p. 1219, says the treaty was signed at London, the 20th Feb., 1343. *Hist. de Bretagne*, by Morice. Tom. i. p. 267, and note lx.

whatever he possessed: to some he gave armour, to others horses; and when on a certain occasion his money failed, "and little money he had," he secretly entered the chamber of his mother, broke open a chest which contained a casket wherein she kept her jewels, silver and gold, and seizing upon the whole, he distributed it amongst his followers. His mother was greatly enraged on discovering the theft, and the perpetrator of it. She recalled the prophecy of the Converse as to his future greatness; but she regarded his recent conduct as a bad beginning of a career of renown. One of her maidens, however, who had more confidence than the mother in the future of Bertrand, begged her mistress not to be offended with her son, for he would put her money out at good usury, and before the end of the year he would restore it to her twofold.*

Bertrand, in distributing his booty among his companions, after informing them of the manner in which he had acquired it, declared that in a short time for one denier which he had taken he would return a hundred; and fortune soon threw in his way an adventure which enabled him to perform his promise. While riding one day in a forest, not far from the castle of Forgeray, to meet his men, he was accompanied by a single servant on foot. Both were armed. Bertrand was mounted on a large and strong horse, and he carried a battle-axe on his shoulder, with a good sword and a large buckler which hung from his side. His valet Orriz followed him on foot.

"Sir," said the valet, "I will not run after you much longer; if you do not give me a horse or mule, I will soon quit you."

"Peace!" said Bertrand. "I swear to you, if I live, in a short time you shall be well mounted."

* Cuvelier, vv. 638—672.

While this conversation was going on, Bertrand saw a knight in full armour coming towards him on his way to the castle of Forgeray. The knight was mounted on a spirited war-horse,* he had a bacinet† on his head, and he carried a lance and a highly polished shield. He was accompanied by a squire, also in full armour and well mounted, and by a servant on horseback, who carried a well-filled mail. When Bertrand inferred from his armour that the knight was an Englishman, he said to him :—

"Sir, who are you? By your appearance you seem to be an Englishman. Have you come here to injure Charles de Blois, my honoured lord?"

"Yes, by my oath," replied the knight; "and because you have so spoken of your lord, I will put you to death in a moment."

The knight then lowered his lance, and made an impetuous charge upon Bertrand, who raised his battle-axe, and on the approach of his antagonist, struck the lance, which he cut in two. Again raising his axe, he struck the knight on his casque, and redoubling his blows, he beat him down from his horse. Bertrand quickly dismounted to avail himself of the advantage which he had gained, when he was fiercely assailed by the squire of the knight, who attempted to run him through with his spear;‡ but Bertrand, with a blow of his formidable axe, cut off the sword arm of the squire, and with a second blow struck the horse on the head, so that both horse and rider rolled over on the plain. He now returned

* *Destrier.* Cuvelier, v. 700. "War-horses, that is to say, horses of considerable height, were led during an expedition by the squires, who kept them at their right hand, from whence they were called destriers."—St. Palaye, *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, pp. 17, 18, and note (37). Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Dextrarii.*

† The *bacinet* was an iron casque or helmet, in the form of a basin. Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Bacca* and *Bacinetum.*

‡ *Espoi*, *epieu*, a boar-spear.

to the knight, who was unable to rise, and thrusting his light spear between the steel plates of his armour, he put him to death. In like manner he dispatched the squire. In the meantime, Orriz was not idle: for as soon as he saw his master engaged with the knight, he attacked his valet with right good will; but when the latter perceived that his master was overthrown, he put spurs to his horse, and attempted to fly into the forest with the treasure. Bertrand observed him attempting to make his escape, and leaping on the horse of the fallen knight, he soon overtook the valet, and slew him with one blow of his axe.*

The English knight, his squire and valet having been slain in the manner described, Bertrand proceeded to examine the mails carried by the sumpter-horse, which he found to contain a rich booty, consisting of silver, gold, and jewels. It was the ransom of the knight which he had been carrying to the castle of Forgeray. Bertrand not only took possession of this prize, but he stripped the dead knight of his armour, and accoutred himself with it, according to the customs of the time and the laws of chivalry; and his servant having done the same with the spoils of the squire, they took the way to Mote de Bron, the castle of Sir Regnault du Guesclin. There dismounting from his horse, Bertrand found his mother; and falling on his knees, when near her, he prayed:—

"Mother of God! deign to guard *my* mother from all evil and peril, and give her the will, knowledge, and advice to pardon me for my transgressions. I took from you," then addressing his mother, "the other day, your precious jewels; now I will restore them to you."

* Cuvelier, vv. 673, 764. The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Sire Bertrand du Guesclin*, in narrating this incident, mentions seven as the number engaged on the part of the English knight, and four on that of Bertrand; ch. iv. pp. 5, 6.

"Bertrand," said the now delighted mother, "you are quite merry. Have you become a knight since Tuesday?"

"No," replied Bertrand; "but before a year passes, I intend to be one, if I have my will: for he who emulates the good will always come to honour, while he who follows the vile will soon become vile."

Bertrand then divided his booty, and returned to his mother more than a hundred-fold that which he had taken.* Two days he remained at home; on the third he departed, commending his mother to God, and leaving with her, to be kept for him, a few jewels and the gilded spurs of the English knight. The remainder of the booty he took with him into the forest, and distributed it among his followers.†

During the treaty of Malestroit, which was concluded on the 19th of January, 1343, as already mentioned, and which comprehended not only the kingdoms of France and England, but the province of Brittany, acts of hostility still continued between the rival factions in the last-named province; although, with the exception of a battle between the forces of the Countess de Montfort and Charles de Blois in the Lande of Cadoret, during the year 1345,‡ they were probably confined to such acts of brigandage as those committed by Bertrand du Guesclin and his followers. That treaty had been wrested from Edward through his necessities, and therefore it was not destined to any long continuance between the kingdoms of England and France; and a pretext was soon found by the king of England for the renewal of hostilities, in the decapitation of Lord Oliver de Clisson

* "La chose tant ala
Que Bertrans li gentilz à sa mère donna
Pour I. denier XX. solz de ce qu'il emprunta."
—Cuvelier, v. 804.

† Cuvelier, vv. 772, 820.

‡ Guil. de St. André, v. 395.

and fourteen other Breton lords, by the orders of the king of France, under a suspicion of treason. Edward III. was greatly incensed at the execution of these Breton lords, which he regarded as an insult offered to himself; and he was only prevented from inflicting a like punishment on Sir Hervey de Léon, then a prisoner in his hands, through the pacific counsels of the Earl of Derby. The king of England, though he was restrained from giving vent to his indignation against a subject for the wrongs of his master, was resolved on obtaining satisfaction for the real or supposed affront; and, accordingly, he sent word by Sir Hervey de Léon to the king of France, that he would regard the treatment of Lord de Clisson and the other Breton nobles as an infringement of the treaty concluded between them, which he would hold as no longer binding.*

After various delays, Edward III. sent an army consisting of nine hundred men-at-arms and two thousand archers into Guienne, under the command of Henry, Earl of Derby, a brave and generous nobleman, accompanied by the Earls of Pembroke and Oxford, Baron Stafford, Sir Walter Manny, and many others. The Earl of Derby landed at Bayonne in the summer of 1345,† and went immediately to the city of Bordeaux, where he remained but a short time. He then proceeded to lay siege to Bergerac, a strongly fortified town on the river Dordogne, which was taken, although defended by a numerous garrison, and supported by the Count de Lille with a large force.

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 178, 180. The king of France declared that the decapitation of the Breton lords was not designed as an infringement of the treaty, but that it was a just punishment for the crimes of murder and robbery committed by them.—Raynaldus, *Annal. Eccles.* 1344, § 61.

† For the account of the war in Guienne, the dates of Froissart, who is not generally very accurate in that respect, have been corrected by the aid of the valuable notes to Buchon's edition of the Chronicles.

The Earl of Derby was equally successful in gaining many important places in Périgord and the Agenois, which his opponent attempted in vain to prevent. The latter, finding that he could not successfully oppose the English general in the field, distributed his forces among the different fortresses of Guienne. The earl then returned to Bordeaux, and while there he was informed that the Count de Lille had collected another army, and that he was laying siege to Auberoche.* The Earl of Derby determined at once to relieve the garrison, and he concerted an expedition with the Earl of Pembroke, who was at Bergerac, to attack the Count de Lille before Auberoche; but the Earl of Pembroke failing to appear at the time and place appointed, the Earl of Derby, after consultation with the Earl of Oxford, Sir Walter Manny, and other officers of his army, resolved to make the attack without his aid, although his forces amounted to only three hundred lances and six hundred archers, while those of the French were ten times as numerous. After devising the mode of attack, the English advanced along the skirt of a wood, which concealed them from their enemies, until they approached within a short distance of their camp. They then displayed their banners, and putting spurs to their horses and shouting their war-cries, they made an impetuous charge on the French. The surprise was complete. As no precaution had been taken to prevent such an attack, so no resistance was opposed to it; and the Count de Lille was wounded and taken prisoner in his tent, with a number of other French lords. The Count de Comminges, with a considerable force, then encamped on the opposite side of

* During the siege of Auberoche, the citizens of the town sent a servant with letters to the Earl of Derby to inform him of their condition, but he was taken prisoner by the besiegers and thrown back into the town by an engine, with the letters tied around his neck. Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 191.

the town, made a gallant attack on the victorious English; but in the end the French were all slain or taken prisoners, except those who could make their escape through the darkness of the night. After taking the castle of La Réole, the town of Angouleme, and other important places, the Earl of Derby returned to Bordeaux to pass the winter.*

In the early part of the year 1346, John, Duke of Normandy, the eldest son of the king of France, was sent into Guienne to oppose the English, with an army of one hundred thousand men; but he achieved nothing worthy of such great preparation. He retook the town of Angouleme, but he suffered the garrison to escape by a trick of Sir John Norwich, the governor; and he consumed the greater part of the season from the 1st of May to the latter part of August in a fruitless effort to take the castle of Aiguillon, an almost impregnable fortress situated at the confluence of the Lot and Garonne, in which he tried in vain every expedient known to the military science of that period. From this siege he was recalled by the news of the fatal battle of Crécy, and the Earl of Derby was suffered to complete his conquests in Guienne, which he afterwards extended as far as Poitiers in Poitou; from whence he returned to Bordeaux, with the design of joining the king of England, then engaged in the siege of Calais.†

While the English army under the Earl of Derby was pressing the siege of Aiguillon, Edward III. had collected a large army to oppose the Duke of Normandy in Guienne. He had embarked from Southampton on the 2nd of July, 1346. The wind, which at first was propitious, on the third day after leaving port drove him on the coast of Cornwall, where he was forced to remain at anchor for six days. While there he listened to the counsels of Sir Godefroy de

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 183, 203.

† Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 208, 216, 251.

Harcourt, a noble French refugee, who had been driven out of France by Philippe de Valois. This nobleman, one of the great barons of Normandy, and a brother of the Count de Harcourt, had incurred the displeasure of the king of France during the preceding year, and in consequence he was banished from the kingdom.* It was the fault or misfortune of Philippe de Valois, by the severity of his punishments, and the arbitrary manner in which they were inflicted, to convert into active and bitter enemies some of his most influential subjects. By his unrelenting persecution of Lord Robert d'Artois, an old friend and a devoted adherent, he had driven him to seek the protection of his most powerful foe, and entailed on his country a fatal war, which lasted long beyond the period of his own life. By the decapitation of the Breton lords, not only without a trial, but without a definite charge, he had excited the hostility of

* Froissart mentions the disgrace of Sir Godefroy de Harcourt without assigning the cause. Liv. i. part i. p. 203. Fabyan says:—"In the XVI yere of his reygne (Philippe de Valois), a great discencion grewe among the nobles of Normandy by reason of parties takyng some with Sir John of Harcourt and other with Sir Robert Barthran, then marshal of France, for covenantes of maryage appoynted atwene the sone of the said Sir Robert upon that one partie and the doughter of Sir Roger Bacon, whose wyfe or maides moder was then maryed unto Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, brother of the abovesaid Sir John upon the other partie: for varyance whereof great warre was lykely to have ensued, if the kyng the sooner had nat sent streyght commandment that eyther partie shuld kepe his peas, and to appere before hym and his lordes at Parys, and there to have theyr grevaunce by hym and his lordes determyned. At whiche day of appearaunce the sayde Sir Godfrey apperyd nat, nor none for hym, but contrary the kynges commandment assieged Sir William Berthram, bysshop of Bayonn and brother to the foresaid Sir Robert, than beying in a castill. And when he sawe he myght nat prevayll agayne hym, he then drewe unto the Englysshemen and ayded them agaynst the Frenshe kynge."—*New Chronicles of England and France*, by Robert Fabyan. Reprinted from Pynson's Edition of 1516, by Henry Ellis. (4to.) London, 1811.

their friends and adherents, and especially of Jeanne de Belleville, the high-spirited wife of Lord de Clisson, who not only dedicated her whole life to avenge the wrongs of her husband, but who raised up and devoted a gallant son to the same cause. By his severe treatment of Sir Godefroy de Harcourt he drove a powerful and malignant subject from the continent over to England, where he succeeded to the same place at the court and in the confidence of Edward III. which had been formerly occupied by Lord Robert d'Artois; and though his malevolence was not greater, his advice was as fatal to his country: for his hatred to Philippe, in the language of Froissart, "afterwards cost the kingdom of France, and especially the province of Normandy, so dear, that the effects of it were visible after the lapse of one hundred years."

Sir Godefroy de Harcourt advised Edward to abandon his expedition into Guienne, and invade France through Normandy, telling him that it was the richest country in the world; that the province would be at his mercy; that he would find none that would dare to oppose him, for the people of Normandy were unused to arms, and the flower of their chivalry was engaged in the siege of Aiguillon; that he would find the towns without walls; and that his fleet could follow him as far as Caen. This counsel influenced the conduct of Edward, who thereupon steered immediately for the coast of Normandy, and arrived at La Hogue in the Cotentin on the 12th of July, 1346. Upon landing he separated his army into three grand divisions: the right, under the command of Sir Godefroy de Harcourt; the left, under the Earl of Warwick; and the middle he led himself, accompanied by his son Edward, so well known to his own and subsequent times as the Black Prince.

The fleet under the Earl of Huntingdon coasted along close to the shore, and seized upon all vessels, great and

small, which they found. At the same time a body of archers and light-armed troops kept opposite the fleet, as near the sea as they could march. These took and pillaged the towns of Barfleur, Cherbourg, Carentan, and others of less importance; and so rich was the booty collected in cloth, gold, silver, and jewels, that "the army-boys esteemed a garment lined with the fur of ermine of little value." The main body of the army, in three divisions as mentioned, then commenced their destructive march. By the king's order, the right and left divisions were commanded, however far they might leave the centre division during the day, to return to it at night; and in this disposition they swept the Cotentin with fire and sword, burning and laying waste everything that fell in their way. The English found the country rich, and abounding in all things: "the granaries were stored with corn, the houses full of all kinds of riches, chariots, carts, horses, hogs, sheep, and the finest oxen in the world."

Edward III. made short marches through this plentiful country, where it was necessary to look out for no provisions "except wine." The wretched inhabitants fled in wild dismay at his approach, satisfied, if that were possible, to save their lives. The English army proceeded in this manner until they reached St. Lo, on the river Vire, a town of eight or nine thousand inhabitants, which was taken and pillaged without resistance. From St. Lo, Edward marched to Caen, where the Count d'Eu, constable of France, attempted to oppose his progress; but the forces of the French, consisting chiefly of the citizens of the town, fled at the approach of the English without striking a blow; whereupon the town was taken after a short conflict in the streets, and the Count d'Eu made prisoner. Edward then marched to Louviers, a rich but defenceless town, which he took without a struggle, and then entered the county of Evreux,

leaving behind him all the fortresses, as it was his object to spare his troops. After setting fire to the towns of Vernon and Vernueil, and laying waste the country around Rouen, he extended his ravages by Poissy to the suburbs of Paris.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 217, 227.

CHAPTER V.

The battle of Crécy. Defeat and imprisonment of Charles de Blois. Jeanne la Boiteuse. The Great Plague. Unsuccessful attempt of the French to recover Calais.

PHILIPPE DE VALOIS hastily collected from different quarters a large and tumultuary army of more than a hundred thousand men to oppose this invasion of the English. Whereupon Edward III., whose whole force when he landed in Normandy did not much exceed thirty thousand,* deemed it most prudent to commence his retreat. He therefore repaired the bridge over the Seine, which had been broken down, and marched through the Beauvoisin to the river Somme, where he found all the passes carefully guarded by the French. The king of France, with the evidences of the bloody and devastating march of the English continually present to his eyes or his imagination, was extremely anxious to give them battle; and he followed so closely upon Edward's rear, that at Airaines, near Abbeville, he found that the king of England had abandoned the camp of the night before with so much precipitation, that he had left behind him a large quantity of provisions: flesh on the spits, bread

* Froissart estimates the number of the troops engaged in the battle of Crécy at much less, liv. i. part i. p. 234. He makes Philippe's army eight times more numerous than the English, ibid. p. 233.

in the ovens, wine in casks, and tables laid out. Edward, after many unsuccessful attempts to pass the river Somme, at length, by the treachery of a French prisoner named Gobin Agace, induced by a promise of release from captivity, discovered the ford of Blanche-Tache, below Abbeville, which he crossed after a sharp contest with a body of French troops commanded by Godemar du Fay, and took a position near Crécy, where he determined to make a stand and give battle to Philippe.

The king of England here prepared himself for the doubtful events of the morrow with great composure. At night he invited the earls and barons of his army to supper, and afterwards sent them at an early hour to seek repose. He then withdrew into his oratory, and, after offering a devout prayer for a successful issue of the expected battle, about midnight he sought repose himself. Early the next morning he heard mass with his son, the Black Prince; and the greater part of his people confessed their sins and partook of the communion, as a fit preparation for the great peril which threatened them. The king then made his dispositions for the battle with much skill. He placed his waggons and horses in an enclosure near a wood in the rear, and drew up his men on foot in three divisions—placing the first under the command of his son Prince Edward, assisted by the Earl of Warwick, Sir Godefroy de Harcourt, Sir John Chandos, and others; the second under the Earl of Northampton; and the third he commanded himself. When he had arranged his forces in order of battle, with his marshals on his right, he rode from rank to rank mounted on a small palfrey, with a white stick in his hand, and besought the earls, barons, and knights to save his honour and defend his right; "and these words he spoke, smiling so pleasantly and with such a cheerful countenance, that whosoever was cast down was recomforted on seeing and hearing him."

After passing along all his battalions, and exhorting his men to do their duty, he ordered them to take some food and drink a cup of wine, as it was about mid-day. When this was done, and the pots, barrels, and other utensils which they had used were restored to the baggage waggons, the men returned to their posts, sat down on the ground with their arms at hand, and quietly awaited the approach of the French. Edward had placed the archers of the division commanded by his son in front, arranged in the form of a harrow, with the men-at-arms in their rear, and the whole were sustained by the division under the Earl of Northampton, while he kept his own division in reserve. The coolness of Edward, and the proper disposition of his forces, exhibited a striking contrast to the want of everything like military skill in the officers or discipline in the men on the opposite side.*

Philippe de Valois, who had taken up his quarters in the town of Abbeville, left it on the morning of Saturday, the 26th of August, 1346, with the intention of giving battle to the English without delay; but he acted on the advice of some of his counsellers, and sent forward three knights to examine and report upon the dispositions of his opponent. The knights upon their return advised the king to defer the engagement until the following day, when all his forces would have arrived, and recovered from the fatigues of a long march, and when proper dispositions could be made for the battle. Philippe acted on this counsel, and immediately issued an order to his troops to halt: and those who were in front obeyed, but the others who were in their rear pressed forward, declaring that they would not halt until they were on the same line with the front ranks; and the first continued to advance when the others approached, until the

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 229, 234.

battle was forced on by an undisciplined multitude, without order or array, and the result was the almost certain consequence of such a beginning.

When the engagement was inevitable, Philippe de Valois sent forward a body of Genoese cross-bowmen, amounting to fifteen thousand, to commence the battle; but they had been fatigued by a long and rapid march under arms, and by the weight of their cross-bows; whereupon they intimated to their officers that they were not in a condition to perform any great feats of arms.* This was heard by the Count d'Alençon, the king's brother, who scornfully exclaimed:—"We do well to burden ourselves with such rascals, who fail us at our need!" The Genoese, however, advanced to the attack; but they soon recoiled before the well-directed aim of the English archers, and fell back on a body of men-at-arms on horseback, who were ordered by the king of France to cut them down for being in the way. Nowhere on that sanguinary battle-field were things better managed on the part of the French. No attempt at discipline or organized effort was anywhere made. "Kings, dukes, counts, and French barons, did not advance together; but some before and some behind, without arrangement or order." Many instances of ill-directed valour and individual heroism did occur on that disastrous day; but such efforts could not restore what had been lost by the want of discipline and the commonest generalship. The consequence was that the French were dreadfully slaughtered and wholly routed, and Edward III. was left the undisputed master of the field. From Crécy the king of England proceeded to lay siege to

* The inefficiency of the Genoese cross-bowmen at this battle is attributed by the Last Continuator of Nangis to their want of precaution in suffering their bowstrings to get wet in a shower of rain which fell just before the engagement, while the English archers placed theirs in their caps on their heads.—"Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 201, 202.

the important town of Calais, which at length yielded to his arms after a gallant and obstinate defence, that was protracted by the besieged for nearly a year.*

The English monarch, who was then in the prime of life, was extremely fortunate in all his enterprises. He was successful in the war of Guienne under the conduct of the Earl of Derby; he was successful in his invasion of France; he was equally successful at home, where the Scots were defeated near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by his wife, Queen Philippa; and while engaged in the siege of Calais he was gratified by hearing of the successes of his ally, the Countess de Montfort, in Brittany. The treaty of Malestroit, which had been only partially observed by the rival factions in that duchy, had now expired; and both parties, aided by their respective allies, the kings of France and England, began to resume hostilities more openly and on a larger scale than during the truce. The Countess de Montfort had received from Edward III., then before Calais, a force of two hundred men-at-arms and four hundred archers, under two valiant knights, Sir Thomas Daggeworth and Sir John Hartwell, who were joined by a Breton knight, Sir Tanguy du Chatel, and these three knights made frequent attacks on the forces of Charles de Blois, which were opposed by him with equal valour and success. "At one hour, one side lost; at another hour, the other; and by both was the whole country overrun and laid waste, while the wretched inhabitants had to pay for all." After various successes and reverses by both parties, the knights above named laid siege to Roche-Derrien, in Tréguier, on the northern coast of Brittany, which was defended by a garrison on the part of Charles de Blois, commanded by a squire named Tassart de Ghines. But the inhabitants, two-thirds of whom were more

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 235, 241, 272.

friendly to the English than the French, becoming restive under the siege, threatened to put their captain to death if he persisted in holding out any longer against the English. Tassart, upon this threat, surrendered the town, and obtained the restoration of his command as the reward of his treachery. Upon this news Charles de Blois left the city of Nantes with a force of sixteen hundred men-at-arms, including four hundred knights, among whom were twenty-three bannerets and twelve thousand men on foot, to recover the town of Roche-Derrien. To oppose this force the Countess de Montfort sent a body of one thousand men-at-arms and eight thousand foot soldiers, under the command of Sir Thomas Daggeworth.

As soon as the English knight came within an easy day's march of the position occupied by Charles de Blois, he determined to surprise the latter by a night attack, and taking with him about half of his force, he attacked the camp of Charles at midnight; but Sir Thomas Daggeworth was himself wounded and captured, with the loss of the greater part of his men, either slain or taken prisoners. While a consultation was taking place between those who had not joined in the engagement and those who had escaped from it, the Lord de Quadoudal came up and advised, immediately, another attack. This second attack, which was made at sunrise, was completely successful, as it was wholly unexpected; and Charles de Blois was in turn taken prisoner, and some of the most distinguished Breton nobles slain, among whom were the Viscount de Rohan and the Lords de Laval and de Chateaubriand. This decisive victory, gained by the forces of the Countess de Montfort on the 20th of June, 1347, gave her an advantage which was never entirely recovered by her opponent.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 259, 262. Many of the incidents of

The Countess de Montfort had thus avenged the imprisonment of her husband; but she tarnished her fair fame by exhibiting, in the treatment of her captive, that she wanted the virtue of generosity. She dragged him after her over the duchy of Brittany, subjected him to the commonest wants and the most cruel mortifications, and, after satisfying her vengeance with the exhibition of his woes, or, perhaps, apprehending his escape, she carried him over to England, and he was shut up in the Tower of London, where he remained for several years a prisoner.*

The cause of Charles de Blois, however, did not expire with his captivity. Jeanne de Montfort found in Jeanne la Boiteuse, wife of Charles de Blois, a rival equal in spirit and conduct, who could wield a sword and lead an army with a will as inflexible and a courage as undaunted as her own. It must have been an affecting spectacle to see two brave and beautiful women exchanging the ease and safety of domestic life for the privations of the camp and the life of a soldier; and, while it excited the sympathy, it probably increased the zeal of their respective adherents, when the restoration of a husband or the advancement of a child was the motive of their conduct, and the duchy of Brittany was the prize.

After the surrender of Calais, by the intervention of Pope

this affair have been narrated differently by the different historians, who also disagree as to the date. The battle took place, according to an inscription on the tomb of the Lord Guy de Laval, in the collegiate church of Vitré, on the 18th of June, 1347.—*Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 276. *Guil. de St. André*, v. 401, gives the 20th of June, as in the text, in which he is supported by Sir Thomas Daggeworth, in a letter to the Chancellor of England, Buchon's Note to Froissart, p. 260; while other authorities place the siege of Roche-Derrien in the month of December, 1345.—"Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. 194.

* See the testimony of Master George Lesneu, taken in *L'Enqueste faite à Angers pour la Canonization de Charles de Blois*, in the *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. ii. p. 6.

Clement VI., a truce for six months, to commence from the 28th of September, 1347, was agreed upon between the kings of France and England, which was subsequently prolonged, from time to time, till the month of June, 1350.* In Guienne, Poitou, and Saintonge the truce was little respected, and Brittany was rather the theatre of marauding parties than of open hostilities. During the interval, Charles de Blois was released from prison upon the payment of a large ransom, and the substitution of his two sons, Jean and Guy, as prisoners in his stead.†

During the same interval, the whole of Europe was appalled by the Great Plague, which, extending its resistless progress from Asia, swept off, it is computed, more than one-third of the human race wherever it appeared; and, in the language of a contemporary, "such a multitude of people died of it in the years 1348 and 1349 that the like was never heard, nor seen, nor read of, in past times."‡

The disease was contagious; and it commenced by a swelling under the arm-pits or in the groin; and the increase of the tumour was a certain indication of death. It attacked the young rather than the old, and it soon ran its course, seldom lasting over two or three days; and often, persons in sound health one day were carried to the grave the next. Many fled from it in wild affright, and even the more timid priests left the burial of the dead to their bolder colleagues.

This epidemic first came from the east, whence it appeared in Italy, and then, passing the mountains, it reached Avignon, and spread itself throughout Gascony, Spain, France, Ger-

* Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 55, *verso*. Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 136. *Annales Ecclesiastici, ab anno* 1198, *ubi Card. Baronius desinit. Auctore*, Odorico Raynaldo. Romæ. Tom. xvi. 1347, § 24.

† "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 194. *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. i. col. 1487, 1488. Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 255.

‡ "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 211.

many, and the north of Europe. In looking for the causes of this dreadful scourge, many attributed it to the infection of the air and water by poison ;* and, in seeking for the perpetrators of such wickedness, suspicions were directed against the unhappy Jews, many thousands of whom were slain and burnt to death by the Christians in Germany and elsewhere, except at Avignon, where Pope Clement VI. had the good sense and humanity to protect all who came under his jurisdiction.†

However great was the mortality of this dreadful pestilence, it appears to have confined its attacks chiefly to the middle and lower classes of society: for Giovanni Villani, the historian, and Giovanni d'Andrea, a noted jurisconsult in Italy ; Laura, so celebrated as the mistress of Petrarch, at Avignon ; and Alphonso XI., king of Castille, are only mentioned among its most distinguished victims.‡

During the continuance of the truce between France and England, an unsuccessful attempt to recover the possession of the castle and town of Calais was made by a French knight, Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, who, as governor of St. Omer, a town of the adjoining province of Artois, was especially charged with the protection of the northern frontiers of France. Calculating on the cupidity of the governor of Calais, Sir Aymeri de Pavia, a Lombard knight, "as the Lombards are naturally covetous," De Chargny offered the governor the sum of twenty thousand crowns if

* Poison thrown into the wells by the Peloponnesians was the cause assigned for the great plague which devastated Athens, and which has been so graphically described by Thucydides, lib. ii. ch. xlvii. *et seq.*, and by Lucretius, *De Nat. Rer.*, lib. vi., at the end.

† "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 211, 214. Raynaldus, *Annal. Eccles.* 1348, § 30, 33. Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 287, only slightly alludes to the plague of 1348.

‡ Sismondi, *Hist. des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age*, tom. iv. pp. 97, 98. Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 9.

he would deliver into his possession that important post. That sum, as the French knight had conjectured, was too great a temptation for the virtue of the Lombard to resist; and he accordingly promised, on a day named, to accept the bribe and give up the castle; but Edward III., having by some means discovered the meditated treachery of the governor, ordered him to come over to England; and when Sir Aymeri acknowledged his treasonable intentions, the king offered him a pardon, upon the condition that he would aid him in defeating the scheme. Thereupon the governor of Calais was sent back; and Edward collected a force of three hundred men-at-arms and six hundred archers, landed secretly at Calais, and placed the command of the expedition in the hands of Sir Walter Manny.

"Sir Walter," said the king, "I desire you to be the chief of this affair: for I and my son will fight under your banner."

Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, with five hundred lances, appeared at the time and place appointed, after midnight, near Calais, and sent forward Sir Edward de Renty, one of his officers, with twelve knights and a hundred other men-at-arms, to pay the stipulated price and take possession of the castle. When the sacks containing the money had been delivered to Sir Aymeri de Pavia, Sir Edward de Renty and his followers were conducted into the principal tower of the castle, where the king of England was posted with two hundred men-at-arms, who, immediately on perceiving the French, sallied out with their swords and axes in their hands, crying out, "Manny, Manny to the rescue!" adding, at the same time, "Did these Frenchmen think to have recovered with so little trouble the town and castle of Calais?"

Sir Edward de Renty and his party, who saw at once that resistance was useless, surrendered almost without striking a blow; and they were all shut up in a tower of the castle.

Edward III. then collected his troops and sallied out of the castle to attack Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, who was impatiently awaiting the return of his detachment, and was wondering at the delay.

"How long this Lombard stays!" he exclaimed to some of the knights standing near; "he will make us die of cold."

"In God's name," replied Sir Pepin de Ware, "these Lombards are malicious fellows; he is looking to see if some of your florins are not false, and perhaps, also, if some of them are not missing."

While they were conversing in this manner, the English advanced to attack them. Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, who saw that he had been duped, determined not to fly; and, in a short speech, he roused the spirits of his followers, by telling them that they would lose more than they could gain by flight, and that they might yet win the day. He then drew them together, ordered them to dismount, had their horses driven back into the road; and, in good order, with closed ranks, and with the lances of his men shortened to five feet before them, he awaited the onset of his enemies. The English, led by Sir Walter Manny, also dismounted, and advanced to the attack. The shock was severe, and many gallant feats of arms were performed on both sides.

It was the fortune of the king of England, who fought in disguise, to encounter a strong and brave French knight, named Sir Eustace de Ribeumont, who in the combat turned out to be an overmatch for Edward, as he twice brought the king to his knee; but the latter, on both occasions, was assisted to rise by Sir Walter Manny and Sir Reginald Cobham, who fought by his side. In the end, the English were victorious, and the French were all slain or made prisoners; and among the latter was Sir Eustace de Ribeumont, who, finding further resistance vain, delivered

his sword to the king, though still ignorant of his rank, saying at the same time, "Chevalier, I render myself your prisoner."

Edward III. returned after the fight in high spirits to Calais with his prisoners, and at night invited them all to supper, together with his own knights. When supper was ready, the king sat at table and seated his guests with him, who were waited upon during the first course by the Prince of Wales and the English knights. After supper, the tables were removed, and the king remained in the hall with the French and English knights. His head was bare, with the exception of a chaplet of fine pearls, which he wore on that occasion. He went from one to the other of his guests, and entered freely into conversation with them. He approached Sir Geoffrey de Chargny somewhat coldly, and, among other things, said to him :—

"Sir Geoffrey, I am delighted to have put you to the proof: you wished to get that at a lower price than I could, when you thought you would have Calais for twenty thousand francs."

To this Sir Geoffrey made no reply, when the king, passing on to Sir Eustace de Ribeumont, said pleasantly :—

"Sir Eustace, I have never seen a knight who could more valiantly assail his enemy or defend his own body than yourself; nor have I ever found in battle one who gave me so much to do, man to man, as you have done this day; so I award you the prize of valour, as do also all the knights of my court."

The king then took the rich chaplet which he wore, and placed it on the head of Sir Eustace, with these words :—

"Sir Eustace, I give you this chaplet, as the best combatant of the day, and I beg you to wear it for the love of me. I know well that you are gay and amorous, and that you are willingly found among dames and damsels; so, wherever you

go, say that I gave it to you. And now I release you from your imprisonment, and you may go to-morrow, if you please."

Sir Eustace readily accepted the rich gift, and, bowing low to the king, said :—

"Gentle Sire, you do me more honour than I deserve, and may God recompense you for the courtesies you have shown me. I will joyfully and readily do what you enjoin me, and, after the service of my dear and dreaded lord, I know of no king whom I would serve more willingly and heartily than yourself."

Wine and comfits were then brought, after which the king withdrew into his chamber. The next day he gave Sir Eustace de Ribeumont two war-horses and twenty crowns, as a further evidence of his esteem for the valour he had shown. The knight, after taking leave of his less fortunate comrades, who were carried to England by the king as prisoners of war, returned home.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 276, 281.

CHAPTER VI.

Death of Philippe de Valois. Accession of John Duke of Normandy. Battle of the Thirty. Bertrand du Guesclin is created a knight. He takes the Castle of Forgeray. Goes over to England.

THE most noted event in France of the year 1350 was the death of the king, Philippe de Valois, who expired at Nogent-le-Roi, on the 22nd of August. His reign may be regarded as one of the most calamitous in the French annals. It commenced with a disputed title, which led to bloody and disastrous wars, to unusual aids and exactions for their maintenance; to all the horrors of unrestrained pillage; to irremediable disorders in the government, and numberless woes among the people. Philippe was hasty of temper, arbitrary in his will, and unrelenting in his hostility, and his financial administration exhibited the two extremes of excessive rigour, in the imposition of burdens on the people, and criminal wastefulness in the collection of the revenues: for his officials were enriched while the king was impoverished.*

* "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 204, 205. "At this time," says Du Tillet, "benefices were exposed to sale, and everything yielded to money. At the commencement of this reign, great exactions and imposts were levied, and then first commenced the tax on salt, which was called *Gabelle.*—*Chronique Abrégée des Roys de France*, p. 63, *verso.* Edward III. did not make a bad pun when he styled Philippe de Valois the author of the *Salique Law.*

He left his kingdom without frontiers on the west, from Bayonne, near the confines of Spain, to Calais; but, above all, he bequeathed to France that deadly quarrel with the English nation, which was not decided until a hundred years after his death, and which engendered feelings of hostility that have lasted to the present age.

Philippe was succeeded by his eldest son, John Duke of Normandy, who immediately after his coronation began to make preparation to defend his kingdom against the English, for the truce between the two countries had expired. He first sent a body of troops to the neighbourhood of Calais, and he then set out himself from Paris, with a large force, to visit the southern portions of France. After passing some time at Avignon with the pope, he traversed the province of Languedoc and came to Poitiers, with the intention of laying siege to St. Jean d'Angely, a strongly fortified town of Saintonge, on the Charente. Edward III., at the same time, sent a body of English and Gascon troops, under Lord Beauchamp, to raise the siege; but their efforts were unsuccessful, and the town surrendered to the king of France, on the 7th of August, 1351.*

About this period there occurred in Brittany an incident which was remarkable even in those times, when war, public or private, seemed not a serious occupation only, but a common pastime. That province was included in a truce agreed to between the kingdoms of France and England, to endure for a year, from the 11th of September, 1351;† but, notwithstanding, it was the theatre of frequent contests between the partisans of the rival factions of De Montfort and De Blois, chiefly carried on by the garrisons of hostile towns and castles. It happened on one occasion that Sir Robert de Beaumanoir, a brave

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 289, 292.

† Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 65, *verso*. Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 232.

and gallant knight, attached to the party of Charles de Blois, and Governor of Châtel Josselin, came with a body of men-at-arms and other soldiers before the castle of Ploermel, the governor of which was a man named Bembro,* and who had with him a number of English, Breton, and German soldiers, belonging to the party of the Countess de Montfort.

Sir Robert de Beaumanoir marched with his troops in front of the barriers of the castle, with the design of drawing out the garrison to attack him; but in that he was disappointed. When Sir Robert perceived this, he approached still nearer, and requested the governor to be called. The latter appeared at the gate, and, after assurance of security for the conference had been given on both sides, Sir Robert said :—

"Bembro, have you within no men-at-arms—yourself and another, two or three—who would desire to joust at the point of the lance, against three others, for the love of their mistresses?"

To this Bembro replied that his friends were unwilling for any one of their number to be slain in a single joust; that it was an adventure of fortune too quickly decided, and one would thereby rather incur the imputation of folly than gain the prize of honour; "but," he added, "I will tell you what we will do, if it pleases you: you may take twenty or thirty of your followers, and I will take as many of my garrison, and we will go into a fair field, where no one can molest or prevent us, and we will order, on pain of the gallows, our other followers, on both sides, and all others who may be present, not to give aid or comfort to any combatant; and there we will perform such deeds that they will be spoken of in future times in halls and palaces, and in all other places

* Froissart calls him Brandebourch, while the historians of Brittany all call him as in the text.—*Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 280.

throughout the world; and the honour and fortune will be to those for whom God shall destine it."

"By my faith," replied De Beaumanoir, "I agree to it; and you speak most gallantly. Now do you take thirty, and we will have thirty also, and I promise it by my faith."

"I also promise it," said Bembro; "and whoever shall well maintain himself there will acquire more honour than in a single joust."

The combat was thus decided upon; the place was then appointed; and four days afterwards was the time fixed for the meeting.* During the interval, each leader selected his thirty combatants as he pleased, and all provided themselves with suitable armour.

On the day appointed, Bembro and his thirty chosen companions first heard mass, then armed themselves, and went to the place agreed upon for the combat. They dismounted, and then gave the spectators a strict injunction not to interfere with the combatants on any contingency. When Sir Robert de Beaumanoir and his thirty followers appeared on the field—who were called French, for the sake of distinction, as the others were called English†—they also dismounted, and gave their friends the same order not to interfere in the combat. After a brief parley, the combatants withdrew to a short distance, when, upon a given

* The rendezvous was appointed at the *Chêne de Mi-Voie* (Half-way Oak), which was midway between Josselin and Ploermel, and the day named was the 27th of March, the fourth Sunday of Lent, of the year 1351.—*Hist. de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. p. 280. "On the site of the Half-way Oak (fallen, from decay, according to tradition, within the last two hundred years) a pyramid has been erected in our time."—Note of M. Charrière to Guil. de St. André, v. 945.

† Sir Robert de Beaumanoir's party was composed of nine French and Breton knights and twenty-one Breton squires. Bembro could only find twenty Englishmen in his garrison—the rest were Germans and Bretons.—*Hist. de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. p. 280.

signal, they all rushed forward, and a fierce, promiscuous, and well-matched contest ensued, hand to hand. At the first shock, one of De Beaumanoir's men was slain. The French did not on that account relax their efforts; the struggle was kept up on both sides with great valour, "as if they were all Rolands and Olivers," and it was maintained with equal skill and endurance for a long time, until all the combatants lost their strength, breath, and ability to continue the fight. They then mutually agreed to stop and rest, until some one of either party should give the signal to renew the engagement. At that time, four of the French and two of the English were slain. They all rested for a good while; some of them drank wine, which was brought to them in bottles; others dressed their wounds and repaired their armour, which was broken.

When they were all refreshed and ready to renew the combat, the first one who got up gave the signal and recalled the others. The battle then recommenced as fiercely as before, and again lasted for a long time. The combatants used short and sharp Bordeaux swords,* lances, and daggers, while some of them fought with battle-axes. With these weapons they gave each other dreadful blows. "It may well be believed that there were gallant feats of arms performed on both sides, man to man, body to body, and hand to hand. They fought as good champions, and sustained themselves, the second time, with great valour." In this engagement De Beaumanoir, the leader of the French, was wounded. The loss of blood and the fatigues of the combat made him very thirsty, and he asked for water. "Beaumanoir, drink your blood," said Geoffrey du Bois, "and your thirst will pass off." This sneer made him ashamed

* As to the different kinds of swords used at that time, see note of Du Cange to Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," p. 418.

of his meditated resolution to leave the field, and he returned to the combat.*

The English at length were defeated, and Bembro, their leader, was slain, with eight of his followers, and the rest surrendered when they found that they were no longer able to defend themselves : for they neither could nor would fly. Sir Robert de Beaumanoir and his surviving companions carried their prisoners to Castle Josselin, and afterwards courteously ransomed them, as soon as their wounds were healed, for there was no one of either party who was not wounded.

To his narrative of "The Battle of the Thirty"—an incident so strikingly illustrative of the manners of the times, where no better pretext could be found for a bloody riot than the boast of him who possessed the fairest mistress—Froissart adds, that he saw afterwards at the table of Charles, king of France, a Breton knight named Sir Yrain Charnel, who had been engaged in that battle, and that his face was so disfigured and cut up, that it exhibited the strongest proof how fiercely the battle had been contested ; and Sir Enguerrant d'Eudin, a good knight of Picardy, likewise showed that he had been there, as well as a squire named Hues de Raincevans.† "This adventure was related in many places : some regarded it as a silly thing, others as an outrage and great presumption."‡

* *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 281.

† These two last names are not in the list of combatants given by Morice, in *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 280, or by Jules Janin, in *La Bretagne*, where may be seen, at p. 236, the coats of arms of each of the knights and squires of the French party.

‡ Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 293, 294. The above incident has been translated almost textually from Froissart, as it has been for the first time restored to his great work by the diligent researches of M. Dacier, and adopted by M. Buchon, in his edition of the Chronicles. It forms a part of the twenty-two first chapters of the second part of the first book

On the 6th of December, 1352, Pope Clement VI. died at Avignon, and was succeeded by Etienne Aubert, bishop of Clermont, under the name of Innocent VI. The newly created pope, after fruitless efforts to make peace between the kings of France and England, only succeeded in effecting a truce between them, which was prolonged until October of the following year. During this cessation of foreign hostilities, the peace of the kingdom of France was disturbed by internal dissensions, arising from the arbitrary conduct of the king, and the unrestrained power of the nobles. John, whose temper was hasty and irritable, had caused, by his simple order, the decapitation of the Count d'Eu and de Ghines, constable of France,* under a charge of treason, without observing in the proceedings against so distinguished a personage any of the forms of justice; and he had appointed Sir Charles of Spain constable in his stead, giving him, besides, not only large possessions in land and money, but also certain fiefs claimed by Charles the Bad, king of Navarre. These measures of King John produced great irritation in the minds of the French nobles, and the last especially excited the anger of the king of Navarre, who, suppressing his resentment until a suitable opportunity was presented, afterwards, with the aid of his brothers, Philippe and Louis, followed the constable into Normandy, and there slew him.†

This act was extremely irritating to the king of France, who would admit no excuse or palliation which the perpetrators could offer; and, to save themselves from the effects

of this edition, which fill the gap hitherto supposed to exist in the work of Froissart. See the Advertisement of M. Buchon, liv. i. partie ii. pp. 282, 283.

* The Last Continuator of Nangis places this event under the year 1350.—"Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 223.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 298, 302. "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 227. *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Charles le Mauvais*, par feu M. Secousse. (4to.) Paris, 1758, pp. 28, 32.

of his vengeance, the king of Navarre and his brothers formed an alliance with the king of England, who was always ready to seize upon any pretext to renew hostilities with France. Edward thereupon made great preparations for the invasion of that kingdom, and levied three armies: one, which he determined to lead himself into Normandy; the second, under Henry Earl of Derby, who had been created Duke of Lancaster, he ordered to be sent into Brittany to the assistance of the Countess de Montfort; and the third he destined for Gascony, under the command of Edward the Black Prince.*

The king of England embarked from Southampton for the coast of Normandy; but he was forced by contrary winds to land on the island of Guernsey, where he remained for seven weeks, waiting for intelligence of the motions of the king of Navarre. In the meanwhile, the king of France, by the advice of his council, suppressing his resentment, and acting from motives of mere policy, had succeeded in detaching Charles the Bad from his alliance with Edward III.—for the king of Navarre, as Count of Evreux, was able to introduce an enemy almost to the gates of Paris.

When Edward discovered that Charles had made peace with the king of France, he returned to England; but he only remained there a short time, when, setting sail from Dover, he passed over to Calais. From Calais he overran without resistance the greater part of the county of Artois, and sat down before the strong castle of Blangis, situated about two leagues from the town of Hesdin. While Edward was there encamped, he sent word to the king of France, by a valiant French knight named Boucicault—a prisoner on parole, and at that time on his way to deliver himself up—that he would wait at that place for eight days, prepared to give him

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 303, 304.

battle. John, who was then at the city of Amiens, with a force greatly superior to that of the English, paid little attention to the message; but, when he found that Edward, after the expiration of the time indicated, had returned to Calais upon the receipt of information that the Scots had invaded England and taken the town of Berwick, he advanced with his army to St. Omer, and sent a formal challenge to Edward to meet him, "with a hundred against a hundred, a thousand against a thousand, or army against army." To this challenge Edward coolly replied, that "he had waited for him before Blangis for ten days, and desired nothing so much as a battle; but that he had then received other news, and he would fight, not at the instance of his enemies, but at the will of his friends." Edward thereupon returned hastily to England, resolved to inflict a signal punishment on the Scots; but he accomplished little more than the recapture of Berwick; and the king of France, after the departure of the English, disbanded his army, and returned to Paris.*

During the treaty between the kings of France and England, which had been renewed on the 6th of April, 1353, Charles de Blois, not being able to raise in Brittany the sum which he had promised to pay for his ransom, returned into England at the expiration of the time which had been fixed for the payment. As the treaty did not put a stop to private wars between the partisans of the two crowns, Charles de Blois made his complaints to Edward III. of the ravages committed by his troops in Brittany, and obtained a suspension of arms in that province from the king of England, who sent over a serjeant-at-arms to give notice of the truce, and to require its strict observance.†

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 304, 310. "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 229.

† *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. i. col. 1489. Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 269.

Favoured by this truce, the Bretons were quiet during the winter season; but acts of hostility recommenced with the return of spring. Hugh Calverly, an enterprising English officer, learning that the Maréchal d'Audeneham had been invited to the castle of Montmuran by Jeanne de Combourg, dame de Tinteniac, resolved to take him prisoner; but Bertrand du Guesclin, who accompanied the maréchal, and whom the various fortunes of the war in Brittany had made a cautious and wily partisan, placed thirty men in ambuscade on the road which led to the castle. The entertainment had scarcely commenced when Calverly arrived; but he was arrested by the archers and men-at-arms posted on the wayside. D'Audeneham and Du Guesclin, being informed of the danger of their men, armed themselves and sallied out of the castle at the head of their companies. Du Guesclin, before the engagement, wished to be created a knight, and he obtained that distinction at the hands of Elatre du Marais, a Norman knight. The action was well contested; and, though Calverly had a greater number of men than his opponents, he was unhorsed and taken prisoner by Enguerrand de Hesdin, and his troops were soon put to flight.*

Not long after the discomfiture of Hugh Calverly at the castle of Montmuran, Bertrand du Guesclin, while seeking for some new adventure "by which he might acquire honour," found himself one day in the neighbourhood of the castle of Forgeray, with sixty followers. Here he learnt from a servant whom he had just taken prisoner that Robert Blancbourg, the governor of the castle, had left it with the greater part of the garrison, in the hope of surprising a portion of the forces under Charles de Blois. Bertrand at once determined to attempt to take the castle by stratagem, and he instantly put his design into execution. He divided

* Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. pp. 283, 284.

his men into two equal parts, one of which he stationed in a wood near the castle, and with the other, disguised as wood-cutters, with their armour concealed, he advanced to the gates of the fortress. He went himself before, bearing upon his shoulders, like the rest of his followers, a great load of wood. Some of these, when they found that they were observed by the watchman, who sounded his trumpet on their approach, "wished themselves in the salt sea." But Bertrand marched on imperturbably, singing as he went along; and, both by his appearance and manner, so completely deceived the sentinels that, after a short parley, the gates were thrown open, the chains loosened, and the draw-bridge was lowered. He crossed the bridge, and, throwing down his load in the gateway, to prevent the gates from being closed, drew his sword, and cutting down the porter with one stroke, he shouted his war-cry: "Guesclin!"

Bertrand was bravely seconded by his men, who had followed him to the gates, and these were promptly supported by those who had been stationed in the neighbouring wood. The garrison soon assembled to oppose his entrance, and the contest was fierce and bloody at the gates. As the two parties were nearly equally matched, the combat had continued for some time, when one of Bertrand's men discovered a large body of horsemen riding towards the castle. Upon the near approach of the strangers, he called out to them, "Do not enter here unless you come to aid Charles de Blois. If you are English, you had better fly, or you will be dead men: for the brave Bertrand, with five hundred men, is here confessing the English." The new-comers turned out to be friends; and, when they entered, they saw Bertrand engaged in the hottest part of the fight, with his armour broken in many places, and streaming with blood. Some of them recognised him; others said, "See what a madman! was ever such a squire in the world before!" Bertrand still continued

the fight, though blinded by his own blood, and rejected the efforts which were made to withdraw him from it; but the victory had already inclined to his side when the succours arrived, and shortly afterwards the castle was surrendered. The victors closed the gates, and ordering wine to be brought, they were drinking it together, when they were informed that Blancbourg, the governor, was returning, and even then approaching the castle. Bertrand determined at once to attack him, and sallied out of the castle with a strong force. In the conflict which ensued, Blancbourg was slain and his followers were routed. Bertrand then returned to the castle, of which he became the governor.*

After placing a sufficient garrison in the castle of Forgeray, Bertrand du Guesclin, in company with a number of the principal lords of Brittany, under a safe conduct, dated the 10th of November, 1354, crossed over to England, to treat of the ransom of Charles de Blois. Edward III., while offering to treat with the Bretons, expressed some apprehension lest the terms of the treaty might not be faithfully observed on their part. To this imputation Bertrand du Guesclin sharply answered, "We will keep it, even as you will keep it yourself." This bold retort so offended the English monarch that he was on the point of ordering his arrest, when one of the Breton nobles whispered to the king that Du Guesclin was somewhat light-headed, and they only made use of him as a pleasant fool. By this adroit interposition, the anger of the king was diverted from its object, and Bertrand was permitted to withdraw, and return in safety to his own country.†

* Cuvelier, vv. 830, 1037. "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 38. *Chron. Anonyme*, ch. 5.

† Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 291. *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. i. col. 1496. Note of M. Charrière to Cuvelier, tom. ii. p. 333 (9). Du Chastelet, *Hist. de Du Guesclin*, p. 14.

CHAPTER VII.

Expedition of the Black Prince into Languedoc. Convocation of the States-General. Arrest of the king of Navarre, and decapitation of the Count de Harcourt and others, by order of the king of France. Consequences of this step. Battle of Poitiers.

THE truce which had been concluded between the kings of France and England at Malestroit, in the year 1343, and renewed many times by the intervention of the legates of the Pope, expired on the 1st of April, 1355; and while Edward III. was occupying the attention of King John, in the northern provinces of France, as already mentioned, the Black Prince was engaged in a marauding expedition into Languedoc. The prince left England with an army of one thousand men-at-arms and eleven thousand archers, to which he added, in Guienne, five hundred lances and three thousand light-armed troops.* As he was not provided with the means of attacking fortified places, the only result which attended the expedition was the acquisition of an immense booty, which he collected, with little or no resistance, from the rich and defenceless towns along his route.

The country about Carcassonne, Toulouse, and Narbonne, which comprises the present departments of the Upper Garonne and Aude, was then one of the richest in the world;

* *Bidaus.* These troops were armed with darts, a lance, and poignard.

the inhabitants were unused to war, and they had prospered under the influence of a long peace; their chambers were adorned with carpets and tapestry, and their coffers filled with precious jewels. In that abundant country, the richest clothes were esteemed of no value by the invaders—nothing but silver plate and good florins could satisfy the cupidity of the English and Gascons; and the rich plunder was forced from the wealthy inhabitants as the price of their ransom from captivity. The Black Prince, when he reached Toulouse, which at that time was not much less populous than the city of Paris, found that the suburbs had been destroyed by order of the Count d'Armagnac, who repressed with difficulty the ardour of the citizens, to the number of forty-nine thousand, for a sally against the English, by telling them that they were unacquainted with the use of arms, and that they could perform no better exploit than to guard their town.

The Black Prince, being unable to carry it by storm, passed it without molestation, and took on his route the towns of Mont-Giscard, Avignonet, and Castelnau-d'Ari, which were wholly unfortified, or only protected by walls constructed of earth. He then marched to Carcassonne, a strongly fortified town, where he found the suburbs unfortified, save by chains thrown across the streets. These offered but an ineffectual resistance to the English. Leaving Carcassonne, he next marched to the city of Narbonne, which was as well fortified as Toulouse; and here, in like manner, after an unsuccessful attempt to take the city, he burned the suburbs, and then made preparation to retrace his steps, with his army laden with booty. He returned to Carcassonne by a different route from the one by which he had gone, and took on his way the town of Limoux, which he first plundered, and then so effectually destroyed that "he left nothing standing that could afford shelter to a horse;" and the wretched proprietor on his return could not point to the

spot where once stood his house, and say with certainty, "This was my heritage."

While the English were thus laying waste without resistance the province of Languedoc, the Count d'Armagnac was collecting forces to cut off their retreat; but he lost so much time in waiting for the Lord James de Bourbon, then lieutenant of the province, that the English army repassed the river Garonne without opposition, and returned safe, with their accumulated spoil, into Guienne.*

The king of France, in order to obtain the necessary means to carry on the war against the English, summoned a convention of the States-General, which met in November, 1355. He procured from that body, after some deliberation,† an ordinance imposing a tax on salt. This tax was collected, but not without difficulty. At Arras, in Picardy, it occasioned an insurrection of the populace, in which many of the wealthier citizens were slain; and in Normandy it was openly resisted, and the ordinance set at defiance by the king of Navarre, the Count de Harcourt, and their adherents.

The king of France, who was as hasty in his resolutions, as he was obstinate in adhering to them when formed, determined to punish all those who resisted his authority, and especially the king of Navarre—declaring that he would have no one master in France but himself; and adding that he would never have perfect joy while the king of Navarre lived.

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 313, 321.

† The demands of the king were acceded to by the States-General, on the conditions that the collectors of the revenue should be appointed by themselves, and that they should meet in the following year to examine the accounts of the receipt and disbursement of the public money; that the king should promise not to debase the coin; and that the *droit de prise* (the right of taking cattle, corn, and other property, by the officers of the crown, for the use of the king) should be for ever abolished.—*Recueil des Ordonnances.* Cited by M. Buchon, in his notes to Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 322.

An unexpected incident soon gave him the opportunity to gratify his resentment.

Charles the Dauphin,* who had been recently created Duke of Normandy, and who had gone to take possession of that duchy, was not aware of the designs meditated by his father against the king of Navarre and the Count de Harcourt; he therefore, without suspicion of danger, invited them to dine with him at his castle at Rouen on the following Saturday. They, with some others, accepted the invitation. The king of France, by some means, was informed of the invitation, and of its acceptance. He thereupon set out secretly from Paris on Friday, and arrived at the castle of Rouen, where he found his son, with his guests, seated at dinner.

The Duke of Normandy and his guests were greatly alarmed at the unexpected appearance and angry countenance of the king of France, and some of the party were so concerned for their safety that they made their escape from the hall. King John, as soon as he entered the room, walked up to the table, where the king of Navarre was then standing, and taking him by the queue, he gave him a sudden jerk, saying at the same time: "Down, traitor! you are not worthy to sit at table with my son. By the soul of my father, I will not eat or drink again while you are alive."

At these words of the king of France, a squire named Nicolas Duplet,† belonging to the king of Navarre, seeing his master so roughly treated, drew his cutlass and threatened to slay the king of France, who, at this daring act, relinquished his

* Charles was the first of the French princes who was styled Dauphin. The Dauphiné de Viennois was ceded by Humbert to Philippe de Valois, in the year 1349, on the condition that the eldest son of the king of France should bear the name of Dauphin.—Du Tillet, *Recueil des Roys de France*, p. 212, and *Chronique Abrégée*, p. 64, *verso*. Raynaldus, *Annal. Eccles.* 1344, § 60, and 1350, § 39.

† He is probably the same person called Colinet de Bleville by Froissart.

hold on the king of Navarre, and, turning round to his sergeants, said, "Arrest me this fellow, and his master also."

The king of Navarre was accordingly arrested on the spot. He perceived his danger, and strove both by words and manner to appease the anger of the king of France; but no solicitation or excuse, plea or explanation, seemed of any avail. The dauphin, then, with clasped hands, fell on his knees before his father, and passionately entreated him to spare his guests.

"Ah! my lord, have mercy, for God's sake. You will dishonour me: for what will be said of me, when I had invited the king and his barons to dine with me, and you treat them thus; it will be said that I betrayed them. Besides, I have seen in them nothing but propriety and all courtesy."

"With your leave, Charles," replied the king of France, "they are vile traitors, and their misdeeds will soon be discovered. You do not know all that I know."

With these words King John passed on, and, taking a sergeant's mace, he approached the Count de Harcourt, and struck him a severe blow between the shoulders, saying, at the same time, "Out, proud traitor! you shall go to prison for a Christmas present. You will know well how to sing, when you escape me. You are of the race of the Count de Ghives. Your misdeeds and treasons will be found out in due time."

After these words, the king of Navarre, the Count de Harcourt, Lord de Graville, with Maubué and Nicolas Duplet, were seized by the order of the king of France, and, with the exception of the king of Navarre, were all taken out of the castle to a field near Rouen, and instantly beheaded, not allowing them even time for confession. The king of Navarre was carried a prisoner to Paris.*

The king of France, by this hasty and arbitrary step, provoked the hostility of the kinsmen and other adherents of

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 322, 325. "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 230, 231.

Charles the Bad and of the Count de Harcourt, among whom were Philippe and Louis of Navarre, the brothers of Charles; William, eldest son of the late Count de Harcourt; Lord Godefroy de Harcourt, his uncle; and others, to the number of twenty, who sent him immediately letters of defiance. John at first treated these demonstrations of hostility with contempt; but he soon found that they were not confined to words, and that the brothers of Navarre and the Norman lords had formed an alliance with the king of England for the immediate invasion of his kingdom.

Edward III. did not hesitate to accept the offers of his new allies to carry out his long-cherished schemes, and he ordered the Duke of Lancaster, then at Pontorson, on the frontiers of Brittany, to join all the forces at his command to those of the Norman nobles, and invade France through Normandy. The Duke of Lancaster thereupon met the Norman lords at Evreux. Their joint forces amounted to twelve hundred men-at-arms, sixteen thousand archers, and two thousand brigands,* who overran and pillaged the country belonging to the king of France as far as the town of Rouen; but John collected an army of forty thousand men to oppose this invasion, and the Duke of Lancaster and his allies, not being able to meet so large a force in the field, retreated to Cherbourg, in the Cotentin.

After the retreat of the Duke of Lancaster, the king of France, upon the advice of his marshals and the Counts de Bourbon and d'Artois, abandoned the pursuit of the English and Navarrois, and laid siege to the city of Evreux, belonging to the king of Navarre. Not only the city and the castle, but the suburbs were strongly fortified; they all, however, yielded after a protracted defence; and John then proceeded to lay

* These troops were infantry, armed with lances and bucklers, and for defensive armour wore a species of coat-of-mail, called a *brigandine*. Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Brigandina* and *Brigancii*.

siege to Breteuil, one of the strongest places in Normandy, and which was defended by a numerous and well-appointed garrison. The besiegers, being unable at first to make any impression on the walls, were forced to erect large machines, with which they annoyed the garrison night and day; and, by the king's order, a large number of carpenters were employed in erecting a great belfry,* of three stories, to be drawn on four wheels, each story of which could contain two hundred men, and the whole was to be covered with skins. "Many called it a cat,† and others a preparation for an assault."

When the tower was finished, and the moats surrounding the fortress were filled with timber and straw, a large number of men-at-arms entered it, and it was pushed up close to the walls. The garrison, who had observed all this preparation to overtop their ramparts, were provided with cannon casting fire‡ and large triangular arrows. At first, before firing their cannon, they fought hand to hand with the men-at-arms

* On the subject of these belfries, or wooden towers, see Froissart, liv. i. part i. pp. 197, 198; where the English employed a similar structure at the siege of La Réole. Du Cange's note to Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," pp. 402, 403. Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Belfredus*, and Geoffrey de Vinsauf's "Itinerary of Richard I.," ch. xxxvi. Ordericus Vitalis attributes the invention of the belfry, in the year 1091, to the restless Robert de Belèsme, son of Roger Earl of Montgomery. Lib. viii. ch. xvi. & xxiv.

† See *ante*, p. 25, note (*).

‡ This is the first time that Froissart mentions the use of cannon. It is still maintained, on the authority of Giovani Villani, that they were used at the battle of Crécy, in the year 1346. If so, it is remarkable that Froissart should have overlooked the fact, when he described all the incidents of that battle with so much minuteness of detail. Besides, it is by no means probable that Edward III. would have embarrassed his march, in a marauding expedition, with machines so cumbrous as cannon, when first invented, or would have dragged them in a perilous retreat as far as Crécy, merely for the purpose "of frightening the horses." The passage of Froissart, Buchon's edition, liv. i. part ii. p. 332, in relation to the use of cannon, occurs in the last of the restored chapters.

in the belfry, and, after many feats of arms had been performed, they began to discharge their cannon and to throw fire upon and within the belfry, and at the same time to shoot large arrows, which slew and wounded a great number. The fire, which was Greek,* caught the roof of the belfry, and drove out those who were in it. As soon as the garrison perceived this they made a great huzza, crying out, "St. George! loyalty and Navarre!" adding, "Lords of France, you will not take us as easily as you thought."

* Du Cange, in his notes to Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," says:—"This fire was so called, because it was first invented among the Greeks, by Callinicus, the architect, a native of Heliopolis, a town in Syria, under Constantinus Barbatus; and likewise because the Greeks were for a long time the only people who preserved the use of it, which they very rarely communicated to any of their allies. Anna Comnena says that this fire was made with pitch and other gums from trees, mixed with sulphur, and the whole ground together. Abbo, in the first book of "The Wars of Paris," has given the composition of it in these verses:—

"Addit eis oleum, ceramque, picemque ministrans,
Mixta simul liquefacta foco ferventia valde."

The Greeks made use of this fire, when at sea, in two ways: first, by fire-ships filled with this fire that were floated among the enemies' ships, and thus set them on fire; secondly, by artificial fires on the prows of these vessels, placed in large tubes of copper, through which they blew them into the enemies' ships. With regard to the use of the Greek fire in battles on land, it was different: for soldiers were then supplied with copper tubes, and blew it through them on their enemies. See Anna Comnena, in the 13th book of her *Alexiad*. Sometimes they threw sharp bolts of iron, covered with tow, well oiled and pitched, with which they set fire to the engines. Joinville thus speaks of this fire: "And they opened a very quick fire upon us with balls made of the Greek fire." Sometimes this fire was put in phials and pots, and it was also discharged from perriers and cross-bows. Albert of Aix, l. vii. ch. 5, remarks that, "hujus ignis genus aqua erat inextinguibile;" but there were other materials by which it could be extinguished—namely, vinegar and sand. Jacques de Vitry, l. iii. ch. 84, adds wine as an extinguisher; and Cinnamus, p. 308, says that "ships were frequently covered with cloths dipped in vinegar to prevent the bad effects of this fire."—Joinville, pp. 405, 406. See also Geoffrey de Vinsauf's "Itinerary of Richard I.," ch. xxxiv.

While the king of France was engaged in the siege of Breteuil, he was informed that Edward the Black Prince had left Bordeaux with a force of two thousand men-at-arms and six thousand archers, besides his light troops; that he had passed the river Dordogne, at Bergerac, and entered the province of Auvergne; that he was laying waste the country without resistance, and preparing to enter the rich province of Berry, with the intention of joining his forces to those of the Duke of Lancaster and the Navarrois in Normandy. John, therefore, was the more anxious to take the castle either by force or capitulation; but, as he could not succeed by the former means, he readily listened to the terms of surrender proposed by the garrison—then much exhausted by the duration of the siege—that their lives should be spared, and that they might take away such property as they could carry with them.*

The king of France not only retained the troops he had with him before Breteuil, but he sent special orders to his nobles, and others holding fiefs of the crown, to join him without excuse or delay, and fully prepared to march at once against the English. This order was promptly obeyed; and John, when he reviewed his forces at Chartres, under the charge of his marshals, Sir John de Clermont and Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, found himself at the head of a large and well-appointed army, as anxious as he was himself to meet the English.

While the king of France was making these preparations, the Black Prince had entered Berry, and, after taking the town of Vierzon, in that province, he marched into the province of Orleans, and took the town and castle of Romorantin, after an obstinate defence.† Learning then that the king

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 325, 333. The twenty-two chapters restored to the Chronicles by M. Buchon, in his edition of Froissart, terminate with the siege of Breteuil.

† Froissart asserts that the Black Prince made use of cannon at the

of France had collected a large army to oppose him, the prince deemed it advisable to commence his retreat into Guienne; but it was then too late, for John had already crossed the river Vienne, at Chauvigny, and thus cut off his retreat. When the prince ascertained that the French army was before him, he well knew that a battle was inevitable. He followed the king of France to within two leagues of the city of Poitiers, where the latter had taken up his quarters, and there he made his dispositions for the battle with great coolness and judgment. That night he encamped among vines and hedges, and placed sentinels to guard the camp. The same precaution was likewise taken on the part of the French.

The next morning, which was Sunday, the king of France, who had a great desire to give battle to the English, heard mass in his tent, and received the communion with his four sons. After mass, he called a council, composed of all the distinguished leaders of his army, where it was decided that each lord should display his banner, lead his followers into the field, and arrange them in order of battle for immediate combat. The trumpets were then sounded, and all armed themselves, mounted on horseback, and went into the field, where the banners of the king fluttered in the wind, and especially the Oriflamme,* which was borne by Sir Geoffrey de Chargny.

siege of this castle. He says:—"Then they ordered cannon to be brought forward, and *carreaux* (large triangular arrows) and Greek fire to be discharged into the lower court." Again:—"Then was the fire brought, and discharged by bombardes and cannon into the lower court."—Liv. i. part ii. p. 337.

* Du Cange, in his notes to Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," says:—"This standard of St. Denis was no other than the Oriflamme. This name was given to it, because it was slit up from the bottom to resemble flames, or, perhaps, from its being of a red colour, and when it fluttered in the wind it appeared in the distance like flames; and besides,

The French army was formed in three grand divisions, under the direction of the Constable Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, assisted by the marshals. Each division consisted of sixteen thousand men-at-arms. The first was commanded by the Duke of Orleans; the second by Charles the Dauphin; and the third by the king. While the constable was arranging the men in order of battle, King John sent Sir Eustace de Ribeumont and three other knights with instructions to approach as near as they could to the army of the Black Prince, examine into his dispositions for the battle, and report as to the best manner of attacking the enemy, whether on foot or horseback. While Sir Eustace and his companions were engaged in executing this order, King John mounted a large white horse, rode up to the ranks, and said aloud to his men: "There are those among you who, when you were at Paris, Chartres, Rouen, and Orleans, threatened what you would do with the English, and wished that you had on your helmets in front of them. Now you are in that very situation; I will show them to you, and you may avenge the injuries they have done you: for we shall fight them without fail."

The king was yet speaking when Sir Eustace de Ribeumont returned with his party and reported that he had examined the order of battle of the English, and he esti-

the lance to which it was fixed was gilded."—p. 390. See also Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Auriflamma*, and Du Tillet, *Recueil des Roys de France, Leurs Couronne & Maison*, p. 234. Many dissertations have been written on this celebrated standard. Father Doubler, one of the monks of St. Denis, where it was kept, says:—"That it was comprised in the inventory of the treasury of St. Denis, made in 1534, by the commissioners of the chamber of accounts, and is thus described:—'*Etendard d'un cendal fort espais, fendu par le milieu en façon d'un gonfanon, fort caduque, enveloppé autour d'un bâton, couvert d'un cuivre doré et un fer longuet au bout.*'"—Buchon's note to Froissart, liv. i. part ii. page 341 (1).

mated their number at about two thousand men-at-arms, four thousand archers, and fifteen hundred brigands. He described them as strongly posted, and said that all their arrangements had been made with great skill; that they had taken a position along a road, and fortified it by hedges and bushes, and placed their archers on both sides of the hedge, so that no one could pass along the road but through them; that between these hedges not more than four men could ride abreast; and that they had placed the men-at-arms on foot behind the archers, arranged in the form of a harrow, on both sides of the hedge, among vines and thorns. This disposition also prevented the approach on horseback. To the inquiry of the king how he could best attack them, Sir Eustace advised that all his men-at-arms should advance on foot, except three hundred chosen men, mounted on their best horses, who should also advance, and endeavour to break through the line of archers; that the men-at-arms should then follow on foot, and attack the enemy hand to hand. The king adopted this advice of De Ribeumont; and, having armed twenty combatants with armour similar to his own,* he commanded all his men-at-arms to dismount and take off their spurs, except the three hundred, who

* It was then a common custom, and it continued for a long time, to arm a number of combatants in the same manner as the commander of the army, or of some important detachment. On the same occasion, Froissart says, Sir Regnault de Cervole, the archpriest, put on the armour of the young Count d'Alençon; liv. i. part ii. p. 342. Shakespeare thus alludes to this custom, in act v. scene iii. of First Part of "King Henry IV.":—

> "*Hotspur.* The king hath many marching in his coats.
> *Douglas.* Now, by my sword, I will kill all his coats.
> I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece,
> Until I meet the king."

And, in the last scene of "King Richard III.," the king exclaims:—

> "I think there be six Richmonds in the field:
> Five have I slain to-day instead of him."

were selected to make the charge against the English archers.

When every preparation had been made for an immediate engagement, the Cardinal de Perigord approached the king, and, with great earnestness, begged a suspension of the order to commence the battle that he might go over to the prince and apprise him of his great danger. The king yielded a reluctant consent, and told the cardinal to hasten with his mission, and return speedily. The latter went over without delay to the English army. He found Edward on foot, at the head of his troops, waiting for the signal to begin the battle. The prince heard patiently the pacific arguments of the cardinal, and briefly replied, "Save my honour and that of my people, and I will readily listen to any reasonable terms." The cardinal thereupon returned to the quarters of the king, and obtained from him a cessation of hostilities until the next morning at sunrise; but his further efforts were unavailing: for, although the prince was willing to restore all the towns and castles which he had taken, release all his prisoners, and swear not to take up arms against the kingdom of France for seven years, the king would listen to nothing less than the surrender of the prince and a hundred of his knights, as prisoners of war.*

During this temporary suspension of arms, certain young

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 337, 343. In the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin* it is stated, that Edward, besides offering to restore his conquests, agreed to pay 100,000 francs, which one of the French maréchals, Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, advised the king to take; but the Maréchal de Clermont dissuaded him from accepting the offer, and charged the Maréchal d'Audeneham with proposing such counsels through fear. To this charge, D'Audeneham angrily replied:—"Clermont, that you may find out whether I have fear, I wish you to know, if the battle is joined, that the point of your lance will not enter it as far as the tail of my horse."—Ch. vii. p. 7.

knights from both armies had ridden out to examine the position and order of battle of their respective opponents, when Sir John Chandos, "a valiant and gentle knight" of the army of the Black Prince, chanced to encounter Sir Jean de Clermont, one of the French marshals, and a seemingly trifling incident gave them a pretext for an angry quarrel. Each of these knights, "who were young and amorous," bore on his left arm the same device, which was "a blue *Dame* worked with a border of sun's rays," and which each wore on his outer garment. Sir Jean de Clermont, displeased to see his device worn by the English knight, halted, and called out to him abruptly :—

"Chandos! how long have you presumed to wear my device?"

"And you mine," replied Sir John Chandos: "for it is as much mine as yours."

"I deny it," retorted the other; "and, if there were no truce between your army and ours, I would soon show you that you have no right to bear it."

"Ha!" exclaimed Sir John Chandos; "to-morrow morning you will find me fully prepared to defend and prove by feats of arms that it is as well mine as yours."

With these words they separated; but the French marshal, while riding off, said in an arrogant tone :—

"Chandos! Chandos! that is the conceited vanity of you English, who cannot invent anything new, but use whatever good thing you see in others." *

At sunrise on the next day, the Cardinal de Périgord madé another ineffectual effort to prevent a battle between the two armies; but, finding the king of France inexorable, he went over a second time to visit the Black Prince, and, on parting, said to him :—

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 344.

"Fair son, do your utmost, for you must fight; there is no hope of peace from the king of France."

"Such, indeed, is my purpose," replied the prince, "and that of my people; and may God show the right." *

The position and numbers of Prince Edward's army had been very accurately represented by Sir Eustace de Ribeumont in the report of his reconnoissance, except that the interval procured by the mediation of the Cardinal de Périgord had been employed by the prince in strengthening the position of his archers by a moat; and he had also ordered a body of three hundred men-at-arms and as many archers, all on horse, to cross a hill on his right, and prepare themselves for an attack on the left flank of the division, commanded by the Dauphin Charles. The horses of his army were placed in an enclosure formed of the waggons and harness, and sufficiently near to be mounted in case of need. Having made all his dispositions for the battle, the prince calmly awaited with his little army, which consisted of not more than eight thousand effective men, while that of John amounted to fifty thousand, of whom there were more than three thousand knights.†

Just before the battle commenced, Sir James Audley, a brave English knight in Prince Edward's army, approached the prince, and said to him, that he had always loyally served both him and his father, and he would continue so to do; that he had formerly made a vow, that in the first battle in which he found the king of England or any one of his sons engaged, he would be the first assailant, and the best combatant on his side, or die in the attempt;‡ he

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 345.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 345, 346. This order of battle, as will be remembered, was very similar to that adopted by Edward III., ten years before, at the battle of Crécy.

‡ "Die in the attempt:" *Demeurroit en la peine*, is the language of

thereupon entreated the prince, as a reward for his services, that he would give him permission to leave the ranks, and put himself in a situation to accomplish his vow. Edward without hesitation granted the request; and the knight placed himself in front of the army, accompanied only by four brave squires, whom he had always retained about him as a body-guard.

The king of France, confident of success from the superiority of numbers, and impatient for the conflict, gave the signal for battle. It was commenced by the three hundred select men-at-arms under the two marshals, Sir John de Clermont and Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, who made an impetuous charge on the English archers and attempted to break through them; but they were enfiladed by the archers from both sides of the hedge, when the horses, pierced by the long barbed arrows of the English, could not be made to advance, and they were speedily thrown into the utmost confusion. Sir James Audley, supported by his brave squires, attacked them at the same time with great valour; and, in the end, the French men-at-arms were routed, with one of their leaders, Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, taken, and the other slain. This detachment, thus routed, fell back on the division commanded by the dauphin, which was attacked in the flank, at the same time, by the archers and men-at-arms sent round by the prince under the cover of the hill; and the French were so sorely pressed by the well-directed arrows of the English, that a number of those in the rear mounted their horses and took to flight. Upon the approach of the forces under the Prince of Wales, the whole division gave way, and retired from the field, carrying with them the dauphin* and his two brothers,

Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 346. St. Palaye, in referring to this incident, renders it *Mourroit à la peine.—Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, tom. i. p. 205, note (6).

* The Last Continuator of Nangis says the dauphin, with the division

the Counts of Poitiers and Touraine. The division under the Duke of Orleans also left the field without participating in the action; so that the king of France, with his command, was left to sustain alone the whole pressure of the battle. John, though deficient in almost every qualification necessary for the commander of an army, was not devoid of courage, or wanting in any of the duties of a knight: for he fought on foot under the Oriflamme, with a battle-axe in his hand, until the standard was lost, its bearer, Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, killed in its defence, and the greater part of his bravest knights slain or taken around him. He at length surrendered, with his youngest son Philippe,* and was led a prisoner to the tent of the Black Prince.

This battle, so disastrous to the French, was fought on the fields of Maupertuis, near Poitiers, on Monday, the 19th of September, 1356. Among the slain were many of the most distinguished nobles of France, including the Duke of Athens, the Constable, and Sir John de Clermont, one of the marshals, besides between five and seven hundred men-at-arms, and six thousand other soldiers. The flight and pursuit lasted to the gates of Poitiers; and such a number of the French were taken prisoners that many English archers and other private soldiers had as many as five or six. The English loss was

under him, did not leave the field until he saw that his father had been taken prisoner.—Tom. ii. p. 240.

* Philippe, afterwards Duke of Burgundy, acquired the surname of *The Hardy*, for remaining on the field of Poitiers, with his father, when all his brothers ran away from it without striking a blow. During his subsequent captivity, with his father, in England, he struck a cup-bearer of Edward III. for serving his master before the king of France, saying at the same time :—"Who taught you to serve the vassal before the lord?" "You are, indeed, Philippe the Hardy," said Edward, who always had the magnanimity to admire a generous action, even in an enemy.—Barante, *Hist. des Ducs de Bourgoyne*, tom. i. p. 102.

computed at nineteen hundred men-at-arms, and fifteen hundred archers.*

The decisive battle of Crécy commenced near sunset, and the approach of night saved the French army from a greater slaughter; but at Poitiers it commenced at sunrise, and continued until noon. Probably, at no period were the French more unsuccessful in battle, or did they exhibit less knowledge of the art of war, than during the reigns of Philippe de Valois and his successor. The English were everywhere superior to them in generalship; but much of their superiority should be attributed to a body of well-trained archers, which at Crécy evidently decided the battle, and at Poitiers gave them an advantage that was never recovered by their opponents. This species of troops appears to have been undervalued by the French;† and although at the battle of

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 347, 353, 358.

† Du Cange, writing of a period a century anterior to the one under review, says:—"To kill an enemy by the bow, cross-bow, or other artillery, has never been esteemed by the French as an action of valour. They only valued blows from the hand, sword, or lance, which required address and skill; and it was for this reason that, in process of time, they forbade the use of cross-bows, arrows, and poisoned darts. It was not sufficient to destroy the enemy by any means whatever: it was necessary that he should be conquered by fair force, and with such arms as displayed the dexterity of the person using them. It is certain that the above-mentioned arms have been forbidden at various times by the popes, and particularly at the council held at Rome, under Pope Innocent II., in the year 1139, ch. 29. The emperor was one of the Christian princes who forbade their use, for similar reasons. From whence it is easy to judge that we must interpret favourably the terms of the Breton poet, when, in the second book of his *Philippiad* he says that Richard I., king of England, invented cross-bows: it must be explained by his meaning that King Richard revived the use of them during his reign. This is so strictly true, that in every action we read of, in the histories of the first crusade, they made use of bows and cross-bows."—Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," pp. 413, 414. In Geoffrey de Vinsauf's "Chronicle of Richard the First's Crusade," the author says that Richard, at the siege of Acre, "placed his most experienced

Crécy they employed a large body of cross-bowmen, these were mercenaries, and the arrow from the Genoese cross-bow proved to be no match for the English cloth yard shaft.

The Prince of Wales, by his unexpected success, was enabled to show that he possessed other virtues besides those of courage and military skill. He treated his prisoner, the king of France, with all the deference and courtesy due to his age and high rank; and he did not forget such of his own followers who had exhibited on the field any extra-ordinary proofs of valour. To Sir James Audley, who had been desperately wounded in the battle, he gave, as the best combatant of the day, an annuity of five hundred marks: all of which, however, the knight generously distributed among his four squires, who had fought by his side in the engagement, and carried him off to a place of safety, when he was incapable, from his wounds, of continuing the battle. The prince, on hearing afterwards that Sir James Audley had given away the annuity which he had granted him, sent for the knight to inquire if the gift had not been acceptable to him. To this the latter replied, that the four squires, who had faithfully served him, and enabled him to accomplish his vow, had hitherto followed him without recompense, and that he thought he could do nothing better with the money than reward them as he had done. He said, moreover, that he had no desire for the accumulation of wealth, as he had enough for his own support. Edward, struck with admiration at the generosity and unselfish spirit of the knight, gave him an additional annuity of six hundred marks on certain lands which he held in England. He

arbalesters, and he caused himself to be carried thither on a silver bed, and from it, by using his arbalest, in which he was skilled, he slew many with darts and arrows."—"Itinerary of Richard I.," book iii. ch. xiii.

then carried the king of France with him to Bordeaux, where he passed the winter in feasting and revelry among his English and Gascon soldiers.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 358, 362. Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 67. "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 238, 242.

CHAPTER VIII.

Disastrous results of the battle of Poitiers. Convocation of the States-General. Dissensions between the Dauphin and the Assembly. Bertrand du Guesclin at the siege of Rennes. He accepts the challenge of Sir William Blancbourg. Fight with Troussel.

THE disastrous results of the battle of Poitiers brought the French monarchy to the very verge of destruction. The king was a prisoner, the flower of the nobility had perished in the combat, or they were made prisoners, while the greater part of the remainder disgraced themselves by a base abandonment of their monarch, and a precipitate flight from the field, almost without striking a blow. Charles the Dauphin was then only twenty years of age. He, therefore, could not be looked to as a suitable prop to the tottering throne; besides, Charles himself was, in the opinion of the people, in a condition little superior to the rest of the nobility. He too had retired from the field of battle with more than eight hundred lances, and had not even approached the enemy. The army which had escaped from the field was demoralized and disbanded, and the treasury was empty.

To apply a remedy to this state of things, "all the prelates of the Holy Church, bishops, and abbots, all the nobles, lords, and knights, the Mayor of Paris, and the burgesses of that city, together with the councils of the

good towns in the kingdom of France, assembled in the city of Paris on the 15th of October, 1356.* Happily for France, the kingdom was not then attacked by foreign enemies, although in Normandy, Sir Godefroy de Harcourt, the restless and implacable foe of the house of Valois, was laying waste the country around Saint Lo in the Cotentin, and the suburbs of Evreux and Avranches; and one of the first acts of the States-General was to send a force of about eight hundred lances to suppress his incursions. Sir Godefroy, even with a far inferior force, did not refuse to meet his enemies; and, though overpowered and encircled by foes, he would neither fly nor yield, and died, battle-axe in hand, with a firmness and constancy exceeded by no one during that military age.†

The States, upon assembling, first proceeded to inquire by what means the kingdom, in the absence of the king, should be governed; and, in the second place, much after the manner of the old English parliaments, to propose a redress of grievances. To carry out their first object, they decreed that the clergy should select twelve‡ persons from their own body, with a similar number taken from each of the other two orders, and this council so chosen should be clothed with the amplest powers for the government of the kingdom. By this distribution of power among the clergy, nobility, and burgesses, the equality of the orders was pre-

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 363. "The Duke of Normandy," says Secousse, "in convoking the States for the 15th of October, only advanced by six weeks the meeting of the assembly, which had been fixed a year before by the king."—*Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de Charles II., Roi de Navarre et Comte d'Evreux, surnommé Le Mauvais*, par M. Secousse. Paris, 1758. 4to. Part i. p. 107.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 363, 365.

‡ According to the *Chroniques de France*, ch. 20, the clergy only named four deputies. Note of M. Buchon to Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 363. And see Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 112.

served ; but, as it afterwards turned out, although everything was done in the name of the three estates, the clergy and the Third Estate profited by the contempt and hatred of the people for the nobility to render themselves sole masters of the deliberations of the entire body.* In making this selection of deputies, the States-General seemed to have been actuated by a wish to disoblige the Dauphin Charles :† for among the deputies selected by the clergy was Robert le Cocq, Bishop of Laon, an ambitious and intriguing prelate, who, notwithstanding all the benefits with which he had been loaded by Philippe de Valois and his successor, did not hesitate to put himself at the head of the party which was formed against the dauphin. Etienne Marcel, the *Prévôt des Marchands* (Mayor of Paris), an interested, ambitious, violent, and cruel man, and an implacable foe to the prince, was also one of the deputies selected by the Third Estate.‡

With such elements of opposition in the assembly to the government of the dauphin, the States proceeded to inquire "What had become of the great treasures which had heretofore been levied throughout the kingdom in tenths, maltotes,§ and subsidies : by debasing the coin, and all the other abuses by which the people had been harassed, the soldiers badly paid, and the kingdom ill-defended."‖ After frequent deliberations with closed doors, the States resolved to grant a subsidy, but at the same time to represent to the dauphin the great number of abuses which they declared had been

* Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 109.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 363.

‡ Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part. i. pp. 109, 111.

§ The *maltote* was an extraordinary impost, levied for the first time by Philippe le Bel, in 1296. It was at first the hundredth, afterwards the fiftieth, of the goods of the clergy and laity.—Note of M. Buchon to Froissart, liv. i. part i. p. 363 ; and Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Tolta.*

‖ Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 363.

introduced into the kingdom; and they begged him to apply suitable remedies to these evils. They denounced seven officers of the king, at the head of whom were the chancellor, Pierre de la Forrest, Archbishop of Rouen, and Simon de Bucy, first president of the parliament of Paris, to whom they ascribed all the existing disorders; they demanded that the accused should be arrested, and that the charges against them should be prosecuted by commissioners to be named by the States. They demanded also that the king of Navarre, who had been imprisoned, as they alleged, without reason, should be restored to liberty, and that the dauphin should be governed by the counsel of those whom they had selected from the three estates. These demands were peremptorily rejected by the dauphin, not only as open attacks on the honour of the king his father, through his officers, but as acts designed to deprive himself of all authority. He, therefore, on the 2nd of November, closed the States, and ordered the deputies to return home.*

The dauphin, failing to get a supply from the States-General, issued an order for the fabrication of a new coin, that common expedient of weak and necessitous princes, to enable him to make a profit on the new coinage. The project, however, totally failed in the result anticipated, through the obstinate opposition of Etienne Marcel, the mayor of Paris; and the prince soon found himself under the necessity of ordering a new convocation of the three estates, which was held at Paris, on the 3rd of March, 1357. The States, in this assembly, succeeded in obtaining all the demands which they had failed to get in the last, and the dauphin yielded even to new ones which were required of him. By this victory of the States-General, a strong democratic element was infused into the administration of the govern-

* Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 112.

ment; and the prince was left with little more than an empty shadow of power.*

Three weeks after the adjournment of the States-General, a truce was concluded at Bordeaux, on the 25th of March, between the kingdoms of France and England, to continue for two years.† In this treaty the province of Brittany was included; but the Duke of Lancaster, who had been left behind by the king of France, when the latter went to meet the Prince of Wales, then ravaging his territories, attempted to follow the king, and join his forces to those of the Black Prince; being unable, however, to cross the river Loire at the bridge of Cé, the duke descended that river, and laid siege to Rennes in Brittany on the 3rd of October, 1356. The town was defended by the Boiteux de Penhoët, one of the bravest captains in the service of Charles de Blois; and the siege was protracted until after the conclusion of the treaty of Bordeaux, in the spring of 1357.‡

It was at the siege of Rennes that Bertrand du Guesclin first appears as an historical personage. He is thus mentioned for the first time by Froissart, in those pages which have conferred immortality on so many names:—"And there was a young bachelor, who was called Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, who has since become so renowned in the kingdoms of France and Spain for his great prowess." Up to this period he had not attracted the attention of the great

* M. Secousse has carefully collected all the authorities for this portion of French history, and his conclusions may be taken as every way worthy of confidence.—*Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. pp. 118, 131.

† Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 67, *verso*; Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 345; *Hist. de Bretagne*, par Morice, tom. i. p. 288; and Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, pp. 105 and 131. Froissart says the treaty was made in England.—Liv. i. part ii. p. 367.

‡ Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. pp. 282, 288.

chronicler,* although he had not been inactive since the successful attack on the castle of Forgeray.

At the siege of Rennes, Bertrand du Guesclin, by his bravery and good conduct, first attracted the attention of Charles de Blois, and soon afterwards of all France. He was not in the town when the Duke of Lancaster first besieged it, and, in order to aid the besieged, and visit his relations in the town, he made many fruitless attempts to enter it; but it was so closely invested on all sides that the garrison could obtain neither succours nor supplies from without. Bertrand kept the forests, near the town, with his men, and made frequent attacks, night and day, on the camp of the duke, shouting his usual war-cry—"Guesclin!" thus aiding the garrison, by diverting the attention of the enemy, watching his motions, and cutting off his supplies. The duke was greatly annoyed by these frequent attacks, and he inquired who it was that so often "awakened his host." He was informed by a Breton knight that his enemy was "a young man of high extraction, who had already performed greater feats of arms than any knight of that country, at his age, had ever done before." He then related to him how the Breton knight had assailed and taken the castle of Forgeray, and that he was named the master of it. The duke replied, "that, since he had taken the castle, he might well claim to be the master of it; but he sincerely wished him somewhere else."

After a general assault, in which he lost more than he gained, the duke determined to resort to a mine. This mode of attack had been apprehended by Penhoët, the governor; and he ordered those living in houses on the walls to hang up copper basins in their houses, that they might by

* His name is indeed mentioned by Froissart, as one of the garrison of Rennes, in the year 1342, but without any special notice.—Liv. i. part i. p. 176.

their vibrations find out the course of the mine. Bertrand, who had information of this new mode of attack from a prisoner whom he had taken, desired the more anxiously to gain admittance into the town. In order to accomplish this object, he made a night attack on the camp of the duke, in which he took four knights prisoners, one of whom he sent with a message to the duke, proposing that he would suffer him and his men to sleep, if the duke would permit him and his followers to enter the town. The duke not only refused to grant the request, but pressed the siege with greater vigour than before.

Penhoët found out, through the means which he had employed to discover the mine, where to direct his operations; and in a short time the mine of the enemy was pierced by a countershaft. A protracted and spirited combat ensued underground, between the English and the garrison of Rennes; but, in the end, the latter were victorious, and all the English were driven out or killed, and the mine was destroyed. This mode of attack having failed, the duke resorted to another expedient to draw the garrison out of the town. He knew that the inhabitants were greatly in want of provisions, and especially of meat; and he accordingly caused a number of hogs, amounting to two thousand, to be driven into a meadow near the town, in the expectation that the citizens would issue out to drive them in; but the governor, suspecting the design of his opponent, used the following means to gain his end without risk. He ordered a butcher to hang up a sow near the gates of the town, which by its squeals soon drew all the hogs in the meadow towards the noise. The drawbridge having been lowered for the purpose, the sow was then released, and it immediately entered the town, followed by the whole drove.*

* *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. viii. Cuvelier, vv. 1055, 1240.

This supply, though very acceptable in a half-starved town, was soon exhausted ; and the duke, failing in all his attempts to take it by stratagem, pressed the siege so closely on all sides that the inhabitants became reduced to great extremities for want of provisions. Penhoët proposed to send information of their condition to Charles de Blois, then at Nantes, and called a council for that purpose ; but the difficulty was to get safely through the lines of the Duke of Lancaster's camp. At length, one of the citizens, who had a large number of children and no food to give them, proposed, if the rest of the citizens would take care of his children, to make the attempt to get through the enemy's lines as a deserter. The governor led out a body of men in apparent pursuit of the citizen, to give colour to his act of desertion, and the stratagem succeeded to their utmost wishes. The citizen was arrested, taken to the tent of the Duke of Lancaster, and, upon being questioned, said that the inhabitants were on the point of starvation ; but that the next day they expected a large supply of provisions, under the charge of four thousand Germans. The duke fell readily into the snare thus laid for him, and sent the greater part of his forces to the quarter whence the pretended supplies were to come. The citizens of the town favoured the statement of the feigned refugee, by sounding instruments and making other demonstrations of joy. After night, the citizen of Rennes left the camp of the Duke of Lancaster, and very early the next morning was proceeding on the way towards Nantes, when he was seized by the scouts of Bertrand du Guesclin, to whom he made known his true character, and gave information of the success of his stratagem. Bertrand was delighted at the news, and took immediate steps to profit by it. He assembled his followers, and at sunrise attacked the camp of the duke, which had been greatly reduced in numbers by the large detachment taken with him to encounter

the supposed convoy. Bertrand met, therefore, with little resistance; and he not only set fire to the tents and lodges of the enemy, but he had leisure to collect a large supply of salted meat, wine, and corn, which he carried with him into the famished town. He then called together the cartmen and others who had brought the provisions from the camp of the duke, and, after paying them in full the price of the provisions, returned to them their waggons and horses, and dismissed them with a courteous message to the duke, proposing to visit him on some suitable occasion, and offering him the wines of the town "to soften his heart."*

The generous conduct of Bertrand towards the provision-dealers of his army made so lively an impression on the Duke of Lancaster that he greatly desired to see the Breton knight; and, at the suggestion of the Earl of Pembroke, he sent him, by a herald, a courteous invitation to visit his camp, with a safe conduct for himself and four attendants. The herald was admitted into the town by the governor, of whom he inquired for Bertrand du Guesclin. Bertrand at that moment was walking along the street of the town, clothed in a plain black jacket,† attended by six squires belonging to his company, and bearing on his shoulder a large battle-axe. The governor pointed out Bertrand to the herald, who exclaimed, on seeing him and his attendants:—

"By my faith! they resemble brigands."

"Herald!" said the governor, "I pray you say nothing to him but in great courtesy, or you will soon have his axe about your ears."

The governor then called Bertrand, and informed him that a herald from the Duke of Lancaster desired to see him. The herald, with a profound inclination, communicated the

* Cuvelier, vv. 1240, 1533.

† "A celle jaque noire comme une crameillie."
—Cuvelier, v. 1580.

message of his master, and delivered the safe conduct. Bertrand at once accepted the invitation, and received the passport, which he caused to be read to him: "for he could neither read, write, nor cipher."*

Bertrand lost no time in repairing to the camp of the Duke of Lancaster, where every feeling of personal vanity he possessed must have been fully gratified: for, from tent and pavilion, the English soldiers poured out to gaze at the redoubted partisan as he passed, to examine his proportions, and comment on his mien and bearing. The duke received him with great kindness, and thanked him that he had accepted his invitation without distrust. During the interview, when asked by his host who was his liege lord, Bertrand replied that "the duke knew well enough that he was the Duke Charles, who, by right of his wife, held the duchy of Brittany."

"Charles will never possess the duchy of Brittany," quickly answered the duke, "but by the death of one hundred thousand men."

"My lord," said Bertrand, smilingly, "I well believe that enough will be slain; but then the greater booty will be left for those who remain."

The duke was amused at the reply of Bertrand, and pressed him warmly to enter his service, offering him the highest inducements, in rank and the possession of lands, which could tempt the cupidity of a poor knight; but Bertrand, after hearing his offers, upon a little reflection, said:—

"Sire, would to God that peace was concluded between you princes, and especially between yourself and my lord the Duke Charles. I would then accede to your request;

* Cuvelier, vv. 1534, 1615. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, p. 10.

but, Sire, you know that, if I were your servant, and afterwards left you to serve another who was your enemy, you would regard me as a traitor and disloyal."

This response not only satisfied the duke, but it greatly elevated Bertrand in his estimation. Wine and comfits were then brought, with which all the knights who were present at the interview were served.*

Among the attendants of the Duke of Lancaster on this occasion was Sir William Blancbourg,† a brother of the governor of Forgeray, who was slain by Du Guesclin, as before mentioned, after the surrender of that castle. He accosted Bertrand, and, in the presence of the duke, challenged him to combat, tendering a joust with three thrusts at the point of the lance. Bertrand, without hesitation, walked up to the knight, and, taking him by the hand, said :—

"Fair sir, great thanks; by my oath, I will not fail you. You demand three thrusts: God willing, you shall have six, if you wish."

The duke smiled at the ready reply of the Breton knight, and appointed the next day for the combat. At this moment the herald-at-arms, who had delivered the safe conduct to Bertrand at Rennes, came up, and, kneeling down, related to his master the manner in which he had been received,

* *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. x. Cuvelier, vv. 1616, 1669.

† Cuvelier, in his poetical chronicle, calls him Brambore. The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Sire Bertrand du Guesclin* has it Brambrock, and the Breton historians as in the text. Froissart names the challenger Sir Nicolas d'Angourne (Daggeworth); but Buchon, in his note to the passage, says :—"The duel between Du Guesclin and Blancbourg cannot be denied; but, such was the humour of the Breton knight, it is very possible that he also fought against Daggeworth, and that the two recitals are equally true."—Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 369, note (3).

and the presents which had been given to him by the Breton knight, consisting of a *jupon* of silk and a hundred gold florins. The duke was so much pleased at the generous treatment of his herald, that, not to be behind the knight in liberality, he made Bertrand a present of a strong and handsome war-horse. The gift was accepted without hesitation; and, on receiving the horse, Bertrand said to the duke:—

"Sire, you are the only person, duke, count, or prince, who has ever given me the value of a denier. I am unable to serve you; but I swear that I would willingly render you any service in my power, my honour saved. The courser is a beautiful one, for which I thank you; and to-morrow I will prove him in your presence."*

Bertrand then took leave of the duke, and returned to Rennes, when he immediately communicated to the governor the tenor of the engagement which he had made for a joust with Sir William Blancbourg, on the following morning, near the English camp. Penhoët attempted to dissuade him from keeping the engagement, on the ground that the opposite party wished to entrap him; but Bertrand expressed the greatest confidence in the knightly word of the Duke of Lancaster, and declared that the joust should take place.

The next morning he put on an under-shirt, closely buttoned up, a habergeon or coat of mail, and a large jacket over it. The governor offered him a steel breastplate, which he declined. A solid shield and lance completed his equipments. He then repaired to the church, where he heard mass and took the sacraments. His preparations being completed, he was on the point of leaving

* Cuvelier, vv. 1670, 1720; and "MS. of the Arsenal," vol. i. p. 63. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. x.

the town, when he met his aunt, who had been seeking him, and who used every argument which entreaty or tears could bring to her aid to deter him from his perilous enterprise.

"Take off your helmet," she said, "and let me kiss you."

"Go home, and kiss your husband," replied Bertrand, "and have dinner ready: for, God willing, I will be back before you have lighted the fire."*

The confidence of Bertrand was not shared by any of the citizens of Rennes: for, upon his leaving the town, they assembled, knights and common people, to look at him, as they feared, for the last time, on his way to the tents of his enemies. On his arrival, the Duke of Lancaster issued an order that no one, armed or unarmed, should approach nearer to the combatants than the distance of twenty lances, or give aid to either of them. He, with the Earl of Pembroke, only remained, as guardians of the field. Bertrand and Blancbourg each received his shield and lance, and prepared forthwith for the onset.

In the first course Bertrand struck the shield of his opponent, and, the lance glancing off, pierced his coat of mail, without inflicting any wound; while the lance of Blancbourg struck the casque of Bertrand, but without injury. They ran two other courses with the lance, with no advantage to either side. Bertrand then approached his opponent, and said:—

"Blancbourg, I have granted your request, and, for the honour of my lord the duke, I have spared you; but, if you want more, more you shall have."

"Let us recommence," replied Blancbourg, gruffly.

The parties then prepared for the fourth course; and, at

* Cuvelier, vv. 1724, 1752; and "MS. of the Arsenal," vol. i. pp. 64, 65, 66.

the first shock, the lance of Bertrand, striking the shield of Blancbourg under the blazon, pierced his coat of mail and his hacqueton, and, entering his body, threw him from his horse. Bertrand spared the life of his adversary, out of compliment to the Duke of Lancaster, who sent a herald to felicitate him on the successful manner in which he had accomplished his engagement, and to say that he might leave the field without hinderance whenever he pleased. Bertrand presented the horse of the conquered knight to the herald, and then returned to Rennes. He was received with joyful acclamations by the citizens, and conducted to the castle, where a sumptuous repast had been provided for him.*

On the evening of the same day that Bertrand left the camp of the English, the Duke of Lancaster ordered an attack on the town, about the hour of vespers, by means of a high tower, which the assailants drew up near the walls. At night the assault ceased ; but a number of men-at-arms and cross-bowmen were left in the tower to guard it, as it was the design of the duke to recommence the attack early on the morrow. At dawn, however, on the next day, by the counsel of Bertrand, a large number of the garrison of Rennes, led by the governor Penhoët and Bertrand, issued from the town, attacked the tower, slew the guards, and set the tower on fire. After a sharp contest at the foot of the walls, between the English and Rennois, the latter re-entered the town without loss. The Duke of Lancaster, having failed to take the town by this, as well as every other mode of attack which he had resorted to, was very willing to raise the siege, and the more especially as he had received a positive order from Edward III. to that effect, dated the

* Cuvelier, vv. 1755, 1850. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. x.

28th of April, which, however, did not reach him until the 30th of June, 1357; but he had taken an oath that he would never leave the town until he had placed his banner over the gates. To extricate him from this dilemma, Bertrand, who knew that the duke had taken such an oath, proposed, in an assembly of the barons and knights in the town, that the duke might enter the gates, with ten attendants, and, to relieve himself from his oath, might place his pennon over the gateway, if he would immediately thereafter raise the siege. This advice being adopted, Bertrand communicated the proposition to the duke, who demanded three days to consider it. Early the next morning, by the order of Bertrand, every one was required to arm himself, and place upon the stalls and shop-windows in the town all the provisions of bread, corn, meat, and fish that yet remained. On this day the duke entered Rennes, according to the permission granted, accompanied by ten of his followers, and rode through the town to examine its means of resistance, and determine, by what he might see of its condition, whether he would accede to the terms proposed. He was met at the gates by Penhoët and Bertrand, who conducted him through the streets of the town. When the duke not only saw "in the market the great quantity of beef, lamb, and fat mutton, the bacon and salt mutton on the stalls, and the bread and corn," but the number of armed men in the town, he sent a herald to his camp for a banner, and, when it was brought, he mounted the ramparts himself, and placed it over the gates. When he descended, wine was offered him, which he drank, and then left the town with his escort. As soon as he had passed the gates, the banner was torn down by the citizens, and thrown at his feet. Though greatly irritated at the indignity offered to himself in the treatment of his banner, the duke struck his tents, set fire to his huts, and raised the siege on the 3rd of July,

1357. From thence he retired to Auray, to join the Count de Montfort.*

Charles de Blois, having learnt that the siege of Rennes had been raised, came to that town to thank the governor and citizens for their attachment to his interests, and to testify to Bertrand du Guesclin how sensible he was of the efforts which he had made to preserve to him the capital of his duchy. To show that his gratitude was not wholly confined to words, Charles granted to him the lordship of Roche-Derrien, in the county of Penthiévre, to indemnify him for the expense he had incurred in his service. He also created him a knight-at-arms—a superior dignity, which should not be confounded with the military title which he had received at the combat of Montmuran.† Charles profited by the treaty of Bordeaux to restore his losses, repair his fortresses, and raise money to pay his ransom : for he was still a prisoner on parole.‡

Notwithstanding the prohibition which the Duke of Lancaster had imposed on the English knights against fighting with Bertrand du Guesclin, they sought every occasion to provoke him to single combat. One of these knights, named William Troussel, whose relative had been taken prisoner by Bertrand, sent the latter a letter, entreating him to liberate his kinsman, and enclosing him an obligation as a security for the payment of the stipulated ransom ; but Du Guesclin, for some reason, did not think proper to grant the request, when Troussel, piqued at the refusal, sent him a challenge, and proposed three thrusts with the lance and three strokes of the sword. Bertrand accepted the challenge, on the condi-

* *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xi. xii. Cuvelier, vv. 1851, 2011. Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. pp. 291, 292.

† Du Chastelet, p. 27.

‡ Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 292. Cuvelier, v. 2094, and note (16) by M. Charrière to v. 2016.

tion that the vanquished party should pay one hundred crowns, to regale the spectators of the combat. The Maréchal d'Audeneham furnished the field at Pontorson, and appointed a day for the fight. Bertrand was sick at that time with fever; and when the Duke of Lancaster was apprised of his condition, he rebuked Troussel severely for having provoked a quarrel with a sick man; but the latter pretended that he was ignorant of his opponent's condition, and sent to notify Bertrand that the challenge would be withdrawn until he was cured of the fever. Bertrand, however, replied that he had health and vigour enough to acquit himself of his engagement; and, moreover, that a knight had not the liberty to withdraw his gage of battle, when he had once given it.

On the day appointed, the Maréchal d'Audeneham had selected two old gentlemen, unsuspected of favouring either of the combatants, to act with him as judges of the combat. He had appointed two heralds for the occasion; and each of the champions was attended by two godfathers, two squires, two coutiliers,* and two trumpeters. A pavilion was erected at each end of the field for the combatants. Their arms were brought into the middle of the field, where they were blessed by a priest. The grounds of the quarrel were read to each of the parties, which they approved of and ratified; and then, with joined hands, they took an oath on the Holy Gospels that the cause which they defended was just, that their arms were not enchanted, that they did not use, for the protection of their persons, any charm or sorcery, and that they would conduct themselves like valiant and loyal knights. After this they received their armour. The godfathers girded on their swords, the squires brought up the horse and shield, and the coutiliers presented the lance and dagger. The champions retired

* In ancient military art, a valet with a lance. — Bescherelle.

to their tents for a moment, when the heralds proclaimed that no assistance should be given to either party, by look, word, or gesture. The trumpeters then gave the signal, when the combatants mounted their horses and prepared for the onset.*

At the first charge, Troussel, by an ill-directed aim, struck the saddle-bow of Bertrand, which gave much annoyance to his friends;† but Bertrand recovered himself, and dealt his adversary a thrust so severe that it pierced his shoulder through and through. Troussel was thrown to the earth by the violence of the blow. He surrendered at once, and paid the hundred crowns. The squires of the two knights also engaged in combat, when, in the end, those belonging to Bertrand gained an advantage over those of Troussel; "and all thought of nothing more than to regale themselves at the expense of the vanquished."‡

* Du Chastelet, p. 28.

† St. Palaye, in his *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, says that one of the principal rules of a tournament, in using the lance, was not to strike an adversary anywhere but on the visage, or between the four members—that is, on the breast-plate.—Tom. i. p. 83, and note (78). Froissart, in his spirited narrative of the fight between the Lord of Chastel-Morent and Sir William Fermiton, says, when the former was wounded in the thigh by the latter, all the bystanders, both English and French, exclaimed that "it was a villainous thrust."—Liv. ii. p. 128.

‡ Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 292.

CHAPTER IX.

Renewed dissensions between the Dauphin and the States-General. Contrast between the French and English in the formation of their respective constitutions. Release of Charles the Bad from prison. Insolence of Etienne Marcel. Insurrection of the Jacquerie. *Death of Marcel.*

WHILE such were the events passing in the province of Brittany, Charles the Dauphin, or, as he was then styled, the Duke of Normandy, was endeavouring to surmount the difficulties with which he was environed on every side. The States-General, without supplying his necessities, had stripped him of all power and influence. They also treated with indifference and opposition the expressed will of his father, their captive monarch. John hearing, while at Bordeaux, of the proceedings of the States-General, was greatly irritated at the prosecution of his trusted counsellors, and the usurpation by the assembly of all the powers of the government, to the prejudice of his son; he thereupon sent an order, to be published at Paris, that the subsidy granted by the States should not be levied, and that the deputies should not reassemble at the time fixed on by the last assembly. The publication of this order produced the greatest commotion in the city of Paris; and the popular discontent was stirred up to such a degree by the machinations of the Bishop of Laon, aided by Etienne Marcel, that the dauphin was forced to rescind the

order of his father by one which he published on the 8th of April, 1357, to the effect that the subsidy should be raised, and the States should reassemble fifteen days after Easter.*

Nothing presents the French and English nations in stronger contrast than the different direction taken by the popular element in the formation of their respective constitutions. From the reign of the first Norman kings, the monarchical element had become greatly weakened in England, and no occasion had been suffered to pass, from the weakness or misconduct of the monarch, without being used to the greatest advantage in increasing the privileges and securities of the people at the expense of the prerogatives of the crown. In France, it was just the reverse. There, at first, the power of the throne was scarcely felt. It had, however, increased in strength and influence, especially during the active administrations of Philip Augustus and Philip the Fair, until it became wholly uncontrolled. There never was a better occasion, if there had been any tendency in the mind of the French people to introduce a permanent popular element into the national constitution, than at this period, when the king was a prisoner, the dauphin a minor without popularity, and the nobles without influence; and there never was a reign when greater need existed for applying a limit to the exercise of arbitrary power, and some corrective to the wasteful expenditure of public money; when King John, by a simple order, sentenced the Constable d'Eu to decapitation, procured the arrest and imprisonment of the king of Navarre, and the instant execution of the Count de Harcourt and others; and when the treasures collected for the public

* M. Secousse has collected and discussed all the passages of the Chronicles which illustrate this period of French history, and corrected the narrative of Froissart, by placing in their proper order the succession of events.—*Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. pp. 131, 137.

wants were wasted in idle and ostentatious displays by the king, in lavish prodigality to his courtiers, and by the criminal negligence and malversation of his ministers. But no advantage was taken of such a condition of affairs. No serious attempt was made to fix the meetings of the States-General at certain periods; and no charter of rights, or constitutional security of any kind, defining the limits of kingly power, appears ever to have suggested itself to the minds of any legislator of that time. The members of the assembly of the year 1357 seem chiefly to have aimed at the means of irritating and humbling the dauphin. This object they fully accomplished: for they forced him to retrace every step which he had taken in opposition to their will. It must, therefore, have been very gratifying to Charles to witness the subsequent decline of influence in that body, which became so completely subjected to the dictation of Marcel and the burgesses of Paris, that the nobles, and even the prelates, became disgusted with the acts of the States done in their name, and they refused to take part in their farther deliberations.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 373, 374. The Bishop of Laon among the clergy, and Jean de Pequigny among the nobles, still adhered to the popular party. Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 139. The following are the reasons assigned by M. Secousse for the decline of credit of the deputies:—

1st. The prelates and nobles were unwilling to permit the burgesses to engross the power which belonged equally to the three orders.

2nd. The deputies of almost all the towns of the kingdom saw the iniquitous and ambitious projects of the burgesses of Paris, who wished to render themselves uncontrolled masters of the government.

3rd. The subsidy granted by the three estates produced little money, not only because the clergy and nobility were unwilling to pay it, but because the emoluments of the collectors of the tax were so exorbitant, as fixed by the States, that they absorbed almost entirely the amount levied.

4th. Etienne Marcel, and the other chiefs of his faction, regardless of the public weal, only aimed at promoting their private interests, and abused their power to rob the kingdom and amass immense riches.—*Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. 140.

Charles attempted to profit by the decline of credit in the deputies of the States, and made an ineffectual effort to govern the kingdom without their aid. After a spirited declaration to Marcel and other burgesses of Paris that he desired no guardians, and that they should not be permitted to intermeddle with the government of the kingdom, he left the city of Paris, and made personal application for aid to many of the towns of the kingdom. But it does not appear that he met with any success. On the contrary, it would seem from his subsequent conduct that this expedition was unproductive of any beneficial results: for he soon returned to Paris, placed himself more completely than before under the influence of the faction controlled by Marcel, and ordered a new convocation of the States-General to assemble on the 7th of November. To add to his humiliation, he found himself too weak to restrain the insolence of Marcel, who continued to write letters to the deputies, in which the name of the dauphin was joined with his own.*

On the meeting of the States-General, which took place on the day indicated, nothing was done to relieve the necessities or lessen the difficulties of the dauphin. Indeed, by the act of some of the members of that body, the embarrassments of the prince were greatly increased: for, on the second day of the session, Jean de Pequigny, by the advice and aid of Etienne Marcel,† released from his imprisonment of twenty months Charles, king of Navarre, the inveterate foe of the house of Valois, who—by his ill-regulated ambition, inconstancy, and bad faith, by treason, cruelty, and bloodshed—acquired among his contemporaries the odious appellation, which history has perpetuated, of *the Bad.* It was feared, by the adherents of the dauphin, that the release of the

* Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. pp. 141, 144.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 374.

king of Navarre would be prejudicial to the public weal, by exposing the kingdom to an irreconcilable and unscrupulous enemy of the prince, and by giving a powerful and active head to the popular faction controlled by Marcel. These apprehensions were soon fully realized: for Charles the Bad lost no time in repairing to Paris, where he was well received; and soon afterwards, "in an assembly composed of all sorts of persons—prelates, knights, clerks of the University of Paris, and others—preached and remonstrated, at first in Latin, very courteously and artfully, in the presence of the Duke of Normandy, complaining of the injuries and ill-usage which he had received without reason. His speech was listened to with pleasure, and was much praised; and thus, by little and little, he entered into the affections of the people of Paris; and so they had more favour and love for him than they had for the Duke of Normandy; and it was so likewise of the people of many other good towns and cities in the kingdom of France."*

Charles the Bad, by this speech, and by the aid of his partisans in the city of Paris, gained so many adherents to his cause, that the dauphin was forced to seek a reconciliation with him; but no treaty or promise ever bound the faithless king of Navarre longer than his supposed interests required, as the dauphin soon after found by the intrigues of Charles with the turbulent citizens of Paris. Among these, the most discontented and the most dangerous was the mayor, Etienne Marcel. Trusting to the power and influence of the king of Navarre, Marcel was emboldened to carry his insolence towards the dauphin to the greatest

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 375. The Last Continuator of Nangis says:—"The king of Navarre took for his text, on the occasion referred to by Froissart, *Justus Dominus et justicias dilexit; æquitatem vidit vultus ejus.* (Psalm x. 8, *Vulgate.*)—*Contin. Chron. Guil. de Nangiaco*, tom. ii. p. 250.

lengths; and he gratified his revenge against the representative of his sovereign by imbruing his hands in the blood of his most trusted counsellors. Giving out among his adherents that the dauphin did not intend to apply any suitable remedies to the great evils that then weighed so heavily on France, and that this negligence was the result of the counsel of those about his person, Marcel and certain other citizens of Paris consulted together on the manner in which they could most effectually remove the objectionable persons from the court of the prince. As a distinguishing badge of the league which they formed to accomplish their daring exploit, they all wore party-coloured caps—blue on one side and red on the other. After determining the manner of executing the bold measure agreed upon, they assembled in a large body, repaired to the royal palace, and ascended, without ceremony, to the chamber where the prince was sitting. The object of this unexpected and tumultuous visit was a matter of special wonder to the dauphin and his attendants. Marcel did not, however, keep them long in suspense: for, walking up to the dauphin, he said, contemptuously :—

" My lord duke, be not alarmed, we have an execution to make here."

Then, turning to his followers, he said :—

" On, my dears! do quickly what you came for."

Without further order, the willing instruments of Marcel drew their swords, and threw themselves like madmen on two of the counsellors of the dauphin—Robert de Clermont, Marshal of Normandy, and Jean de Conflans, Marshal of Champagne*—and these two were slain at the very feet of their master. The assassins then dragged the mangled

* " Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 249, note (2) ; and Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 192.

bodies of their victims down the great staircase of the palace into the court, where they remained exposed to the sight of all. The other counsellors of the prince fled, in wild affright, from this bloody scene. One of their number, Regnault d'Acy, a distinguished and eloquent advocate of Paris, was pursued, and slain in a street adjoining his own dwelling.

This horrible outrage, consummated in his presence, the dauphin was then too weak to punish; content for the time to save his own life, he was forced to submit to the humiliation of wearing the revolutionary cap of his rebel subjects, and compelled to pardon the perpetrators of the murder on the very spot where it was committed.*

The last convocation of the States-General, which had been ordered to meet on the 13th of January, 1358, assembled on the 24th of that month; but it brought no aid to the dauphin. That body was now well-nigh stripped of all influence. It was almost wholly composed of members of the Third Estate; a few only of the clergy, and not a single noble, obeyed the summons.† The young prince, finding that he could hope to receive neither aid nor sympathy from

* "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 247, 249. Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 374. This incident is narrated with certain unimportant variations in the "Chronicles of St. Denis," fol. 277, *verso*, col. i. After describing the slaughter of the two counsellors, the Monk of St. Denis adds:—"The prince, affrighted at what had passed before his eyes, and seeing himself abandoned, entreated the provost of merchants to save him. Marcel replied that he had nothing to fear, and at the same time gave him his cap, *which was composed of red and blue, the blue on the right*, such as was worn by those of his faction in Paris; and he took the cap of the duke, which was dark brown, with a golden fringe, and he wore it the whole day, while monseigneur the duke wore his own."—See Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. pp. 181, 182.

† "Il y vint quelques gens d'eglisse; mais il ne s'y trouva pas un noble."—*Chronique de St. Denis*, fol. 176, *verso*, col. ii. See Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 172.

the States-General, and fearing for his personal safety from the daring insolence of Marcel, and from his own increasing unpopularity with the factious citizens of Paris, determined to withdraw from that city, and make a levy of forces in order to reduce it to subjection. He was now surrounded by other grave difficulties. Apart from the incursions of the *Free Companies*—concerning which there will be hereafter a fit occasion to enlarge—there was a wide-spread and alarming insurrection of the populace in many parts of the kingdom of France, "and especially in Beauvoisin, in Brie, and upon the river Marne; in Valois, Laonnais, in the land of Coucy, and around Soissons." *

This formidable movement, which was probably nothing more than the natural result of the unhappy condition of the times, and is known in French history under the name of the insurrection of the *Jacquerie*, aimed at the destruction of the nobility and gentry, and was conducted under the auspices of a leader who was "the vilest of the vile, and this king was called Jacques Bonhomme." † This insurrection of the *Jacquerie*, which has been described by Froissart in a manner so natural, yet so forcible, and styled by him a *grand, marvelous tribulation*, produced the greatest consternation throughout France. In its merciless ravages, nothing was held sacred: neither age nor sex was spared, and the church shared the same fate as the castle.

Froissart, whose sympathies seem always to have been

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 375.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 376. Jacques Bonhomme (*James Goodman*) was probably nothing more than the *sobriquet* of this famous freebooter. The Last Continuator of Nangis, however, says that *Jacque Bonhomme* was a term of derision applied by the nobles to the rustics, in the year 1356—two years anterior to the insurrection of the peasants. Tom. ii. p. 238. The leader of the *Jacquerie* is called *Guillaume Callet* by the other French chroniclers, and *Karle* by the Last Continuator of Nangis, tom. ii. p. 262.

with his own class, assigns no other motive for an insurrection so widely extended than what was given by some of the unhappy wretches themselves, who, when asked why they did so, replied:—"That they did not know, but they acted as they saw others do; and they thought that they should, in such manner, destroy all the nobles and gentlemen in the world, that there should be no more of them." *

On the other side, the Last Continuator of Nangis, who does not conceal the inclination of his mind in favour of Etienne Marcel and the popular party, assigns more adequate causes for an insurrection which extended to a hundred thousand men.† "In the summer of 1358," says this chronicler, "the peasants who lived in the environs of St. Leu de Cherunt and Clermont, in the diocese of Beauvais, seeing the miseries which overwhelmed them on all sides, and that their lords, far from defending, oppressed them, and did them more evil than their enemies, determined to rise up against the nobles of France."‡

The fate of the *Jacquerie* adds but another instance to the ill-success which has ever attended all insurrections of the populace. Their ignorance of the use of arms, and their want of suitable armour—the difficulty of carrying on their designs by any concerted action, and the want of confidence among themselves—constitute them a feeble foe, in the presence of anything like discipline; and, especially, the excesses to which the indulgence of their brutal passions always leads them, arm all other classes to meet at once, and repel the pressing danger. After committing the most

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 377.

† This is Froissart's estimate, liv. i. part ii. p. 376. The Last Continuator of Nangis only makes them amount to *quinque millia*, five thousand, tom. ii. p. 262; but this estimate may have had reference to some particular band, or it was, as suggested, an error of the copyist.

‡ "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 263.

atrocious deeds, these peasants assembled at the town of Meaux, on the Marne, and, with the aid of a considerable body of men from the city of Paris, besieged the fortified market-place of Meaux, where the Duchess of Normandy, wife of the dauphin, the Duke and Duchess of Orleans, and other ladies, to the number of three hundred, had taken refuge. Here the *Jacquerie* were opposed by the disciplined valour of the famous Gaston Phœbus, Count de Foix, and the Captal del Buch, then returning from Prussia, with a retinue of only forty lances. These gallant knights, learning that a number of noble ladies were besieged in the market-place of Meaux by an infamous rabble, without a moment's hesitation threw themselves into it with their followers; and, with the aid of the Duke of Orleans, they sallied out against the badly-armed and undisciplined peasants, drove numbers of them into the river, slew them in heaps until the victorious troops were weary with killing, and dispersed the rest without resistance. After their discomfiture at Meaux, the wretched creatures never afterwards re-assembled, and the insurrection everywhere subsided.*

The suppression of the insurrection of the *Jacquerie* relieved the dauphin of one of his greatest difficulties, by enabling the crown-vassals, then no longer under fear for their lives and property, to join their prince, in his attempt to reduce the city of Paris to subjection. Etienne Marcel, whose power and influence with the inhabitants of that city had hitherto been unbounded, now perceived that his popularity began to decline; and, as his criminal deeds, and his insolence towards the dauphin, left him no hope of pardon from that quarter, he united himself more closely with the king of Navarre, for whom he procured the appointment of

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 377, 378, and the narrative of the Bascon de Mauléon to Froissart, liv. iii. p. 407.

captain of the city of Paris.* By this appointment Marcel hoped to provide for his own safety, and, at the same time, to increase the difficulties of the dauphin. The latter, who had fixed his head-quarters in the environs of Paris, at the bridge of Charenton, made little progress in the reduction of the city. He therefore listened to terms of accommodation with the king of Navarre; but all efforts at a reconciliation proved abortive, through the bad faith of the latter. An incident, however, of no great apparent consequence, accomplished for the dauphin what he could not effect either by force or negotiation.

A quarrel between a body of English soldiers, in the pay of Marcel, to the number of three hundred, and the citizens of Paris, led to a conflict in which a considerable number were slain. The soldiers were arrested and imprisoned by the authorities to appease the anger of the citizens of Paris; but they were released the following night by Marcel, who was anxious not to offend his English allies. In the meantime, the fellow-soldiers of the slaughtered English, who were outside of the city, determined to avenge the death of their companions. Whereupon they provoked a sortie from the garrison of the city, and led them into an ambuscade, in which nearly a thousand of them were slain in the fight and subsequent pursuit. Marcel was not only suspected of complicity with the English soldiers in this slaughter of his fellow-citizens, but also of a design to introduce foreign soldiers into the city, to overawe or destroy his personal enemies. While under this suspicion, he became involved in a quarrel at night with certain adherents of the dauphin, at the gate of

* The appointment of the king of Navarre as captain of the city of Paris appears to have been overlooked by Froissart. It is mentioned by the Last Continuator of Nangis, tom. ii. p. 259, and in the "Chronicles of St. Denis," fol. 185, *recto*, col. i. See Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 258.

St. Antoine, by attempting to diminish the number of the guard, and withdrawing the keys from the keepers at that gate, as he had done at other places; when, the dispute becoming animated, he was struck down by one of the sentinels and slain. His followers, to the number of fifty-four, were immediately attacked on the fall of their leader, and every one of them put to the sword. With the death of Marcel expired the faction which he had stirred up; and on the next day, the 3rd of August, 1358, the dauphin entered the city of Paris, not only without opposition, but with every demonstration of joy on the part of the citizens.*

The death of Marcel freed the dauphin from the schemes of a daring and unscrupulous enemy, and delivered up the city of Paris entirely into his hands; but it excited afresh the machinations of the king of Navarre, who succeeded in producing the utmost disorder throughout the whole kingdom. He not only sent a defiance to the dauphin, but he collected a large force from all quarters, which he paid liberally from the sums of money amassed through the agency of Marcel. He overran and pillaged the province of Picardy and the neighbourhood of Paris; took, by force or artifice, a number of fortified towns and castles; and occasioned, wherever he appeared, the greatest consternation and distress. The dauphin appears to have been a passive spectator of these hostile measures, as he made no successful attempt to resist them. He seemed stupefied by the real difficulties of his situation. Without trustworthy counsel from any quarter, he was forced to rely mainly on himself for guidance, and he was unable to undertake any enterprise of consequence from

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 378, 385. The Last Continuator of Nangis, tom. ii. pp. 270, 272, describes the incidents relating to the death of Etienne Marcel with much detail, and differs materially from Froissart as to some of the attending circumstances.

his want of means : for he was compelled to depend, as his only source of revenue, on the tax on salt, which could not be calculated on with any degree of certainty, as it was always grudgingly paid.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 386, 390.

CHAPTER X.

Treaty of London between the kings of England and France. Rejected by the States-General. Anger of Edward III. Invasion of Brittany by the Duke of Lancaster. Siege of Dinan. Combat for life and death between Bertrand du Guesclin and Sir Thomas Canterbury. Duelling. Result of the combat.

THE period of two years fixed for the duration of the treaty of Bordeaux was about to expire, when the king of France, tired of his captivity, listened to the hard terms proposed by Edward, by which, for little more than the renunciation by the king of England of his claim to the crown of France, John surrendered to his enemy, in full sovereignty, nearly two-thirds of his kingdom. This treaty was signed at London, the 24th of March, 1359,* and sent to the dauphin for his ratification; but he declined to act upon it, and, on the advice of the king of Navarre,† submitted it to an assembly of

* Some doubt has been expressed as to the date of this treaty; but Du Tillet says it was signed "le xxiiii Mars, m.iii^{c}.lviii., selon la supputation de France, et cinquante neuf, selon celle de Rome, laquelle y'est suyvie."—*Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 68, *recto et verso.* The only treaty between the French and English of this period published by Rymer, is one dated at London, the 18th of March, 1358 (O.S.), and entitled, *De Treugis Burdegalæ concordatis usque ad festum sancti Johannis Baptistæ continuandis.—Fœdera*, vol. iii. par. i. p. 422.

† The king of Navarre probably came to Paris to attend the nuptials of the Count de Harcourt with the sister of the Duke de Bourbon. See

the States-General summoned for the 19th of May, 1359. That body, after mature deliberation, determined that "the treaty seemed too hard; and they answered with one voice that they would rather endure and bear still longer the great mischief and misery in which they then were, than that the noble realm of France should be thus lessened and defrauded; and that King John must remain still longer in England, until it may please God to provide some remedy." This was the only response that the messengers, the Count de Tancarville and Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, could get; and it was equally displeasing to the kings of France and England. John, on hearing it, exclaimed :—

"Ha! Charles, fair son; you have been counselled by the king of Navarre, who has deceived you, and who could deceive sixty such as you are."

King Edward, also, when he received the response of the States, was greatly enraged; and declared "that, before the commencement of winter, he would enter the kingdom of France with a great force, and remain there until he would have an end of the war or a good peace at his honour and pleasure."*

Edward's threat proved to be no empty boast. He immediately set about making preparations to invade France; and, while thus engaged, sent the Duke of Lancaster into Brittany with a body of troops to commence the war, in conjunction with the Count de Montfort. Charles de Blois, having been informed of the arrival of the Duke of Lancaster in Brittany, sent deputies into England to treat for peace with the two kings, John and Edward; but, before the return of the envoys, the duke had laid siege to the

Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 403; and Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 401.

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 409, 410.

town of Dinan. The inhabitants of the town, having foreseen that event, had already demanded aid of Charles de Blois, who sent them from five to six hundred men, under the command of Bertrand du Guesclin. The Boiteux de Penhoët and Oliver du Guesclin, a younger brother of Bertrand, commanded the garrison; and they hoped to defend the town with the same success as the former had defended Rennes. They did defend it with great skill and constancy; but the Duke of Lancaster pressed the siege with such vigour that the garrison were constrained to ask a truce of forty days, and promised to surrender, if, at the expiration of that time, they did not receive succours from the Count de Blois. To this request the duke acceded.*

It was during this suspension of arms that Oliver du Guesclin, while riding out of the town on one occasion to enjoy the fresh country air, encountered Sir Thomas Canterbury, a haughty English knight, who rode up to the young Breton, rudely seized hold of him, and, in an offensive tone, asked his name.

"As you wish to know," he replied, "I am Oliver du Guesclin, the younger brother of Bertrand."

"By Saint Thomas!" said the other, "you shall not escape me—you are my prisoner; and, if you do not yield immediately, I will put you to death, in spite of Bertrand."

The knight was still further incensed at the remonstrances of young Oliver, and, drawing his sword, he advanced to put his threat into execution. Oliver, as he was unarmed and unaccompanied, while the other was attended by four squires, did not think proper to brave the fury of the English knight; he therefore replied :—

* Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 293; Cuvelier, vv. 2030, 2152; and *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xv. Cuvelier states that the truce agreed on was for fifteen days, while the Breton historians and the author of the prose chronicle say that it was for forty days.

"I surrender, as you require it; but I firmly believe that you will restore me without getting two deniers of my money."

"On the contrary," quickly answered the knight, "you must pay me down a thousand florins, or you shall not go away. That is not much money: Bertrand has enough."

Oliver du Guesclin was carried off by the Englishman to his tents as a prisoner; but the scene was witnessed by a Breton knight who knew both Oliver and Sir Thomas Canterbury, and who lost no time in repairing to Dinan to inform Bertrand du Guesclin of the capture of his brother. The knight found Bertrand in the market-place, looking carelessly on at a game of tennis.

As soon as Bertrand heard that his brother Oliver had been seized and imprisoned by Sir Thomas Canterbury, against the terms of the truce, he exclaimed:—

"By Saint Ives! he shall surrender him to me: no day will he ever take so profitless a prisoner."

Without giving a moment to deliberation, Bertrand mounted his horse and rode to the English camp. He inquired for the Duke of Lancaster, and was shown to a pavilion, where he found the duke engaged with the celebrated Sir John Chandos at a game of chess,* with the

* The learned editor of Menage, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Françoise*, voc. *Echecs*, says:—"The game of chess was invented in Persia or India, and its original name, which is *Schatreng*—that is, *king's-play*—is pure Persian. This game was first brought into Africa, and from thence, by the Moors, into Spain, whence it appears to have extended to the rest of Europe. It was never known to the Romans. The Spaniards termed it *Axedres*, which seems to be a corruption of *Schatreng;* the Germans, *Schach-spil*, which signifies the same thing, and which is a hybrid word, composed of the Persian *Schah*, which signifies *king*, and the German *Spil*, which means *game*. I believe that the Italian *Scacchi* and our word *échecs*, have been formed from *schah*, by pronouncing the last aspiration with emphasis, after the Persian custom. As to *échec et mat*, which in Spanish is called *xaque-mate*, in Italian *Scac-*

Count de Montfort, Robert Knolles (the famous leader of the *Free Companies*), the Earl of Pembroke, and others, looking on. The Breton knight dismounted, entered the pavilion, saluted the knights, and respectfully bent the knee before the Duke of Lancaster, who immediately abandoned the game he was playing, received Bertrand with a warm greeting, and, taking him by the hand, raised him from his inclined posture. Sir John Chandos advanced towards him, and kindly said :—

"Brave Bertrand du Guesclin, you are welcome : of my wine you shall drink before you go away."

"Sir," quickly answered Bertrand, "I cannot drink of it until right shall be done me."

"Fair sir," replied Sir John Chandos, "there is not in our host a knight so powerful, who shall not make amends for any wrong he may have done you."

Bertrand then stated his complaint against Sir Thomas Canterbury, and asked that he might be summoned into the presence of the duke. When the knight came, in obedience to the order, the Duke of Lancaster said to him :—

"Here is Bertrand du Guesclin, who comes to accuse you of having seized his brother during the peace we have accorded, made him a prisoner, and put him to ransom. He asserts that this is not well done, and he can prove it."

"Sir," replied the English knight, with much temper, "if this Bertrand, whom I see here, wishes to maintain that I have done anything worthy of blame, which a good knight

comatto, in English *check-mate*, in German *Schach-matt*, it is also formed from the Persian *Schah-mat*, which means *vanquished king*." And see Du Cange, Gloss. voc. *Scacci*. Gibbon, citing as authority the *Historia Schahilludii* of Dr. Hyde, says :—"The Indians invented the game of chess, which was introduced into Persia under the reign of Nushirvan."—"Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," vol. iii. ch. xlii. p. 110.

may not do, here is my gage of battle: and I am ready to prove it in a field, body to body, equal to equal."

"I accept your challenge," said Bertrand, lifting up the gage: "in the presence of these barons I will fight you, and even before night. False and disloyal knight! I will make you acknowledge the charge before these lords, or I will die dishonoured."

"I will not fail you," rejoined the English knight; "and I will never sleep again in a bed until I shall have fought this battle."

"And I," said Bertrand, "will eat but three sops in wine,* in the name of the Holy Trinity, until I am armed."

"You shall be well armed," interposed Sir John Chandos, "and a fine war-horse—the best I have—I will lend you: for I wish to see the trial, without delay, between you."†

It is worthy of remark, that no institution or custom derived from the past has taken deeper hold on the manners and the prejudices of the present day than the practice of duelling. Taking its origin in the habits of the Germanic nations before they were transplanted on the Roman soil, it expanded under the insufficient judicial guarantees of a barbarous age, while it was fostered and developed by the humanizing influences of the institution of chivalry. During the middle ages of European society, no law or custom was more universal or more widely diffused; no station, or sex, or profession, was too high, too weak, or too sacred, to be beyond its reach: for even the judge descended from his

* *A sop in wine:* a piece of bread dipped in wine. See Chaucer, "Canterbury Tales," v. 336, and Gloss. voc. *Sop.* On the subject of vows made by knights in the days of chivalry, see *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, by St. Palaye, tom. i. pp. 156, 157, and notes (5 and 6); and the reader may consult a very curious old poem of the 14th century, entitled *Le Vœu du Héron*, published by St. Palaye in the second volume of his memoirs.

† Cuvelier, vv. 2153, 2317.

tribunal to offer combat to one who had treated his summons with contempt, and the woman and ecclesiastic appeared on the field by their champion. The ancient knight was taught to regard death as far preferable to dishonour; and the lesson, sanctioned by centuries of chivalric deeds, has been transmitted to our times. It is therefore no matter of surprise that the practice of duelling has been so deeply fixed in the manners and sentiments of the present day, and that the efforts to suppress it have hitherto been so difficult, and, as its advocates contend, have not been attended by any corresponding beneficial results.

It has, however, been felt and confessed, by every grave and earnest man who acknowledges the high sanctions of that command of the Old Testament, which teaches, "Thou shalt not kill," and the equally imperative obligation of that precept of the New, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," that these are arguments difficult to withstand: and they would be irresistible, if the legislation of a people were intended for a community of believers, where a strong religious sentiment could restrain the proclivity to offend, the consequences of revenge, and a thirst for blood; but, as all preventive legislation is designed to institute laws for the government of men such as they are, and not such as they ought to be, restraints that would reach the one would not affect the other, and the legislation would be inoperative, if not positively mischievous.

The question for a wise lawmaker to solve is, not whether the practice of duelling should be sanctioned by legislation, but whether a greater amount of good will result to a community in abolishing one evil by the substitution of another: for it has been contended, with much show of reason, that wherever duelling has been in a great measure or wholly suppressed by law, other forms of redress for injuries have been substituted in its stead; that, for the challenge—with

time for reflection, with opportunities for friends to interfere, and with regulations designed to suppress the unnecessary effusion of blood—the revolver and bowie knife, under excited passions, have been substituted, which are manifestly no improvements; and that, while here and there one falls under the former mode, thousands are slain by the latter. Besides, it has been asserted as universally true, that wherever duelling has been abolished by law, the tone of society has been lowered, and the character of woman has sunk in a corresponding degree: for there can be no high spirit or elevated morality among a people where men are influenced by malignant passions and the desire for revenge, yet tamely submit to affronts which degrade their character or impeach their courage.

It has been too much the tendency of modern legislation to protect the individual, while the greater interests of society have been disregarded. As alms, however well distributed, tend to produce poverty, and crime has increased under all attempts to ameliorate the condition of the criminal, so assassination has invariably followed the efforts to suppress duelling; and a greater evil has been entailed on society in the endeavour to restrain a less. Under the existing wholesome influences of an enlightened public opinion and high Christian morals, duels are and must be of rare occurrence; but, as men will fight, prudence would seem to dictate to a wise legislator to overlook those occasional instances of violence —the result of manners that are not without their advantages to society—rather than strive to abolish a practice that all experience has shown to be well-nigh insuppressible, and when no other forms of redress for wrongs have yet been found effectual to be substituted in its stead.

The anxiety of Sir John Chandos to witness the combat between Bertrand du Guesclin and Sir Thomas Canterbury was not shared by the citizens of Dinan, who were greatly

troubled on learning that their favourite champion was about to engage in a contest for life and death with the English knight. There was, however, one fair damsel within the walls of Dinan, in whose bosom Bertrand had excited a softer sentiment than admiration for his great daring and prowess, who did not participate in the general apprehension for the event of the fight.

Tiphaine Ravenel, the daughter of Sir Robin Ravenel,* one of the combatants in the celebrated "Battle of the Thirty"—distinguished for her birth, beauty, and accomplishments—predicted for Bertrand a fortunate issue of the combat. She was at that time twenty-four years of age: "was instructed in philosophy and astronomy, and was wiser and better taught than any one in the whole country." Her prediction gave great confidence to Bertrand's friends, one of whom, a squire, named Amauriz, thought the information too important to be kept from him; but the communication was treated with contempt by Bertrand, and brought from him the rude and ungallant reply, which, probably, was designed to conceal his own secret faith in the assurances of the fair prophetess:—"Begone, blockhead! he is not wise who trusts in a woman: in woman there is no more sense than there is in a sheep."†

Penhoët, the governor of Dinan, did not attempt to prevent the combat; but, as he had no confidence in the good faith of the English, he sent to inform Bertrand that the lists should be erected in the market-place of Dinan, and, if the Duke of Lancaster desired to be present, he

* She was the daughter of Robin Ravenel and Jeanne de Dinan, heiress of Belliere. Cuvelier gives the name Ranguenel, v. 2381. In the *Histoire de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. p. 294, it is Raguenel; and in the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin* as in the text, which has been adopted, as that name has descended to our times.

† Cuvelier, vv. 2325, 2389.

might come, and bring with him twenty or thirty attendants, for whom sufficient hostages would be sent, to secure their safe return. Bertrand acquiesced in this arrangement, not without expressing his entire faith in the character and knightly word of the Duke of Lancaster, who also agreed to the place of meeting, as proposed by the governor of Dinan. As soon as the hostages were delivered, the duke, accompanied by twenty followers, entered the town, where he was very honourably received and entertained, and then repaired to the market-place, where the lists had been erected.*

Bertrand du Guesclin soon afterwards made his appearance, completely armed, according to the custom of knights, with metal armour and greaves, with bacinet and gauntlets, with sword and dagger, and a lance to joust. He mounted his horse, received his lance, and rode towards the market-place, where the field had been prepared. The governor of Dinan, who was the guardian of the field, had it proclaimed that no one should in any manner interfere with the combatants, under the penalty of life and honour.

Sir Thomas Canterbury then seemed to realize for the first time what a serious affair he was about to engage in; and, indulging the hope that the quarrel might yet be adjusted, he procured the offices of two of his friends, Sir Robert Knolles and Sir Thomas Grandison, to propose terms of accommodation. They approached Bertrand together, and Sir Robert Knolles said :—

"Sir Bertrand, none of us desire that you should receive injury on this occasion : for, however successful you may have been with your own countrymen, you are now about to fight with a haughty champion. A good peace is better than a bad dispute ; so, if you will agree to it, we will end this dissension, and acquit your brother of his ransom."

* Cuvelier, "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 89.

"How!" exclaimed Bertrand, "he does not owe a button; and it is, as it seems to me, a custom and good reason that, if a man is wrongly put in prison, he should have free deliverance. I have called God and the Virgin Mary to witness that the false knight shall not escape me, until I have shown him my force and my mastery. Either I will slay him, or I will there lay down my life: unless he will, before this company, give up his sword by the sharp point into my hand, saying: 'I surrender at your command.'"

"He shall not do that," quickly replied Sir Robert Knolles.

"Surely," said Bertrand, "he would thereby commit a great folly."

Sir Robert Knolles then informed Sir Thomas Canterbury that he could get no accord, respite, or pleasant word from his opponent, unless he would submit to dishonour. The English knight now prepared himself for the combat, after having exacted a promise from his friends that, if he gained the advantage in the fight, he should not be prevented from putting his opponent to death; but, if he should be worsted, that they would aid him to procure terms of peace.*

The two champions now took their stations for the onset, and, with lance in rest, sternly regarded each other for an instant. Then, on the signal being given, they put spurs to their horses and met in the midst of the field. "Fire flew from the lances as they were splintered against the polished shields;" but neither gave way nor fell. They passed each other in the course, and on their return they drew their swords, and a hand to hand encounter ensued—fierce, protracted, and bloody; until, at length, the English knight dropped his sword, which gave Bertrand an advantage that he did not fail to avail himself of. He dismounted, took up

* Cuvelier, vv. 2417, 2484. This charge should be received with caution, as it rests solely on the authority of the French chronicler, a strong partisan of the Breton knight.

the sword of his antagonist, and threw it out of the field. Sir Thomas Canterbury, having now no other offensive weapon than his dagger, avoided the approaches of Bertrand, and disregarded his repeated invitations to dismount and fight it out on foot. When Bertrand perceived that he could not overtake his adversary, he drew the armour from his legs, which had impeded his motions, and resolved to await the attack of his enemy. The English knight did make an attempt to ride over him, but Bertrand, avoiding the charge, struck the horse as he was passing, which, starting wildly, threw his rider to the earth. Bertrand sprang upon him instantly, "liked a maned lion," and dealt him such blows over face and head, with his sword and mailed hand, that the knight was soon blinded by his own blood. Penhoët, the governor, then interposed, saying :—

"Hold, Bertrand! you have the honour of it; you have done enough."

Bertrand disregarded this appeal; but to the two friends of Sir Thomas Canterbury he said, on their approach :—

"Fair lords, let me finish my battle: for, by the faith I owe to God the Just, he shall surrender as my prisoner, in like manner as he made my brother Oliver do, or he shall die upon this sand."

"Bertrand," entreated Sir Robert Knolles, "I ask that you will deliver your champion to the duke—he will take it kindly of you; and you have done enough: he is in your power."

"I give him up," said Bertrand, "at your request."

Bertrand then came up and knelt before the duke, saying :—

"Noble duke, do not be angry with or blame me, if I have almost slain this murderer. He would have been slain, but for the love of you."

"He does not deserve better treatment," replied the duke,

"and you should be highly praised for all you have done. Your brother Oliver shall be released forthwith from prison, he shall receive a thousand livres for his harness; and you shall have the horse and arms of the perfidious knight, who shall never come again into my presence, for I have no need of traitors."

The duke then took leave, after drinking some wine which was offered him, and returned to his tents. The fortunate issue of the combat gave great joy to the citizens of Dinan; nor was Tiphaine Ravenel, or her realized prediction, forgotten. The governor Penhoët gave a sumptuous entertainment, to which all the citizens were invited. "There they danced hand to hand, and sang; great was the pleasure, and it lasted a long time."*

* Cuvelier, vv. 2486, 2613.

CHAPTER XI.

Affairs of Brittany. Marriage of Bertrand du Guesclin. His feats at the siege of Melun. Treaty of Vernon between the Dauphin and Charles the Bad. Invasion of France by Edward III. Treaty of Bretigny. King of France returns home. Treaty of the Lande-d'Evrau between Charles de Blois and the Count de Montfort. Wager of battle before the Parliament of Paris.

WHILE the Duke of Lancaster was engaged in the siege of Dinan, the king of England was making preparations on a vast scale to invade the kingdom of France; and, that he might avail himself of all his resources, he ordered the duke to abandon the siege and join him, with all his forces, without delay. The Count de Montfort, being unable to carry on the war without the aid of the Duke of Lancaster, listened to terms of accommodation, and agreed upon a truce with Charles de Blois, to continue until the 1st day of May, 1361.* This suspension of hostilities in Brittany threw out of employment many restless spirits of that duchy, whose sole occupation was war, and among them Bertrand du Guesclin. It was then, during a brief period of repose from excitement and combat, that Bertrand remembered Tiphaine Ravenel, the fair maid of Dinan, who had predicted the fortunate issue of

* Cuvelier, vv. 2645, 2663; and Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 295.

the fight with Sir Thomas Canterbury; and, pressing his suit, he received from Charles de Blois, his liege lord, as the highest reward for his services, the hand of "that fair girl—the wisest that was in France—in despite of many chevaliers by whom she was loved."*

But the blandishments of love could not long detain Bertrand du Guesclin from the exciting scenes that were still passing within his reach: for, although hostilities were suspended in Brittany by the truce between the Count de Montfort and Charles de Blois, and Edward had not yet completed his preparations to invade France, still the dauphin was kept fully employed by the plots and sleepless hatred of Charles the Bad, king of Navarre. In the month of June, 1359, with the troops which had been granted by the assembly of the States-General, called to consider the terms of the treaty of London, the dauphin laid siege to Melun, a town situated on the Seine, above Paris, and held by the king of Navarre. It was here that Bertrand du Guesclin bore arms for the first time in the service of France. His reputation had yet barely extended beyond the limits of Brittany; his name was scarcely known in the French army; and, when the attention of the dauphin was arrested by his skill and daring at this siege, he exclaimed, on hearing the

* Tiphaine Ravenel was worthy of being the wife of a hero: for when she perceived, a short time after marriage, that, through love for her, her husband had relinquished the pursuit of arms, she reproved him in these words:—"Sir, by you have great feats been commenced, and through you only must France be recovered. Now is it thus, that for love of me you would lose the reputation which you have just begun to acquire. Sir, this cannot continue: for I would be greatly abased, who, through you, should be honoured. So know, that if you do not pursue arms, you cannot be loved by any dame who admires valour. And, in truth, my heart cannot be devoted to the love I had for you, if to valour you are thus recreant."—*Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxiv. Cuvelier, vv. 3433 and 2339.

name of the Breton knight repeated, "By my head! I now remember him."*

The portion of the town of Melun occupied by the troops of the king of Navarre was strongly fortified, and it was well defended by the Bascon† de Mareuil, a knight of reputation and skill in the defence of towns, and especially "noted for his dexterity in throwing with effect large stones from the ramparts on the enemy below." When the dauphin had made sufficient preparation for the attack on the town, he ordered a general assault, which was promptly responded to by the knights, squires, and others, armed with lances, shields, and targets, with bows and arbalests, who advanced in such concert, "that it was a beautiful sight to witness the clash of arms." Above four hundred men entered the fosses, with ladders to scale the walls; but "the stones from the ramparts, and the arrows, which flew thicker than rain in winter," made the besiegers recoil. Then it was that Bertrand du Guesclin seized a ladder, placed it against the wall, and, covering himself with his shield, commenced his perilous escalade. The Bascon de Mareuil, who had observed this daring attempt, ordered his men to bring immediately the largest stones they could find. To which they replied:—

"You see before you what you demand: both cross-beams of wood, and casks filled with stones. You cannot miss; hurl them on all sides upon this villain who so gaily mounts. Look how gross and square he is, and how swollen he is in his armour. Ye gods! how good it would be to tumble him into the ditch; he would soon be heart-broken by the fall. Let him have enough: for, in truth, he looks like a porter from Paris, all muffled up in a great coat."

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 401, 402; Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. pp. 295, 296; Cuvelier, vv. 2660 and 3505; and "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 130.

† The word *Bascon*, in old French, seems commonly to mean bastard.

Bertrand, disregarding this mockery, continued to ascend the ladder, calling at the same time on the Bascon de Mareuil to meet him on the ramparts, or come down below, as he could prove, by force of arms, that he had wronged the dauphin. De Mareuil made no reply, but threw down upon Bertrand a large cask filled with stones, by which the ladder was broken, and Bertrand tumbled head foremost into the moat below. The dauphin, who witnessed the incident, ordered him to be extricated from his perilous situation, and a squire took him by the feet, and drew him out of the water. Bertrand was so stunned by the blow, that he seemed more dead than alive. He was carried off and placed upon a warm dung-heap, where, in a short time, he was restored to consciousness. As soon as he recovered his speech, he turned round to those who were watching over him, and asked :—

"Who the devil brought me here? Is the assault ended? I must see it."

"Ho! you should be content," said a squire, who had witnessed his feats at the walls. "You have already had a good share of it."

But Bertrand was not yet satisfied. He raised himself from his position, got his arms ready, and went to join in the assault. On his way, he met some of his own party returning from the walls, who told him that the assault would soon be ended; but, notwithstanding, he went up to the barriers, and advanced further than the boldest of the assailants had yet ventured to go. He drove the enemy back by force, and struck down many of them with his lance. The besieged, at length, were forced to close the barriers and raise the pont-levis. The assault had lasted a long time, and it was not until night that the retreat was ordered to be sounded, with the intention of renewing the attack the next morning; but, during the night, a conference was held

between the contending parties, which resulted in a treaty of peace. By this treaty, the town and castle of Melun were surrendered to the dauphin, who thereupon returned to Paris. He did not go away, however, without showing his appreciation of the valour and services of Bertrand du Guesclin, whom he appointed governor of Pontorson in Normandy. Bertrand accompanied the dauphin to the city of Paris, where he only remained for a brief period, as he was anxious to proceed at once to his government, and protect it from the English and Navarrois, who were ravaging all the surrounding country.*

The treaty concluded at Vernon,† between the dauphin and the king of Navarre, brought no repose to France. While the kingdom was wasted by famine and ravaged by lawless freebooters, a bloody foreign war, conducted by the king of England in person, was about to succeed to the domestic dissensions just settled with the king of Navarre: for the treaty of Bordeaux expired about the same time that the dauphin had concluded the peace of Vernon.

Edward, upon the rejection of the treaty of London, had resolved to take ample satisfaction for the affront: and "the king of England," says Froissart, "this whole summer, made such great preparation to come into France, that no one had ever seen the like before;" and, without estimating the troops under the Duke of Lancaster, and the mercenary soldiers of Germany, Bohemia, Brabant, Flanders, and Hainault, who flocked to his standard at Calais, the chronicler adds:—"there was such a multitude of men-at-arms,

* Cuvelier, vv. 3305, 3664; and "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 125, 133.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 403. The Last Continuator of Nangis, tom. ii. p. 285, and the "Chronicles of St. Denis," state that the treaty was concluded at Pontoise. See Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part i. p. 390.

that the whole country was covered with them, and they were so richly armed and adorned, that it was marvelous, and a great pleasure, to see their shining arms, their fluttering banners, and their army marching slowly and in good order."*

Besides his vast preparations designed for conquest, Edward had made provision, on a scale equally ample, for the comfort and convenience of his army, and for his own pleasures: for "the English lords and the rich men carried—in their wagons—tents, pavilions, hand-mills, ovens, forges, and all other necessaries; and for all this stuff they had above eight thousand wagons, with four good and strong horses to each, which they had brought out of England. And they had, besides, in these wagons, a number of little boats, ingeniously made of cuirbouilli, that it was wonderful to see; and so could three men enter them to cross a pond or a river, however large it might be, and fish at their will. With these the lords and statesmen had great sport all the time, and especially during Lent; but the common soldiers might content themselves with what they could find. Moreover, the king had for himself thirty falconers on horseback, provided with birds, and full sixty brace of strong dogs and greyhounds, with which he went each day to hunt or fowl, as it pleased him; and also, there were many lords and rich men who had their dogs and falcons as well as the king."† With such appointments, Edward embarked from England, the 28th of October, 1359, and arrived at Calais the same day.‡ He overran Artois, Picardy, and Champagne, committing the greatest ravages in a country already wasted by famine and war.

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 413, 415.

† *Ibid.*, liv. i. part ii. p. 427.

‡ Edward's last act, before leaving England, is dated at Sandwich, Oct. 28th, and his next at Calais, Oct. 30th.—Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 453.

The dauphin, who had no adequate means to keep the field against so numerous an army, and profiting by the experience of the fatal days of Crécy and Poitiers, threw the best part of his troops into the frontier towns. This policy defeated the plans of Edward, who had avoided all the fortified places on his route. At length, not being able to meet the French anywhere in the field, he laid siege to Rheims, which he beleaguered for seven weeks, in the hope of taking it, and being crowned there king of France. He was then forced, by the scarcity of provisions of all kinds, to raise the siege. After leaving Rheims, he marched to the frontiers of Burgundy; but did not enter the province, as he had received two hundred thousand francs from the duke, in consideration of his forbearance in laying waste the duchy.* Edward thereupon returned towards the city of Paris, and, after some personal adventures among his followers, wholly unworthy of his great preparations and menaces, listened to terms of peace, which resulted in the treaty of Bretigny, signed the 8th of May, 1360.†

* The Last Continuator of Nangis, tom. ii. pp. 297, 298, refers to this act of the Duke of Burgundy, in purchasing the forbearance of the king of England, as only hearsay, and as too base to be credited; but Rymer gives the treaty in full.—*Fœdera*, vol. iii. par. i. p. 474.

† During the negotiations for peace, Edward's army was exposed to a storm so frightful, "that it really seemed the world was coming to an end;" and Froissart adds, that Edward, in the church of *Notre Dame*, at Chartres, whither he had taken refuge from the tempest, promised to agree to terms of peace.—Liv. i. part ii. p. 432. Cuvelier also, at verse 2684, thus describes this storm:—

"Seigneur, à icel tamps que je vous vois comptant,
Que le rois d'Engleterre aloit France serchant,
Une tampeste vint sur lor host descèndant
De pierres, qui aloient en lor host reversant.
Si grandes, si horribles, si rudes, si pesant,
Que par ses pierres-ci dont je vous vois comptant
Estoient li pluseurs navrez et tuit senglant.
Et s'aloient partout mussant et quatissant."

By this treaty, not only were the differences settled between the kings of England and France, but provision was made for reconciling the conflicting claims of Charles de Blois and the Count de Montfort to the duchy of Brittany. The rivals accepted the mediation of the two kings, and frequent conferences were held for the purpose of hearing their pretensions, and settling the dispute; but the difficulties were found to be irreconcilable, and the conferences ended without any good result.*

Although the treaty of Bretigny, by which he recovered his liberty, was dated the 8th of May, 1360, the king of France did not reach Paris before the latter part of December. After leaving England he went over to Calais, where he was detained, on account of the difficulty of collecting the amount necessary to discharge the first instalment of his ransom. While at Calais, he made a pilgrimage, on foot, to the church of *Notre Dame*, at Boulogne, accompanied by Edward the Black Prince and his two brothers—Lionel and Edmund. Before leaving Calais, the king was enabled to conclude a treaty with the restless and intriguing Charles the Bad, who kept his promise this time with unusual fidelity, and did not again disturb the quiet of the kingdom until just before the conclusion of the reign of John. France now began to breathe freely once more, after the most frightful calamities, the result of years of disastrous foreign and domestic wars; and, outside the province of Brittany, until a short time before the accession of Charles, the peace of the kingdom was only broken by the ravages of the Free Companies, which were composed chiefly of English garrisons, disbanded under the provisions of the peace of Bretigny. The province of Brittany was still kept in con-

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 415, 432; Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. pp. 297, 298; Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 487; and Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 70, *recto et verso.*

stant commotion by the conflicting claims of De Montfort and De Blois; but, as neither party could bring into the field any large bodies of men, without the aid of the king of England or of France, the operations on both sides were confined to the attack of castles and towns of secondary importance.

The year 1361 was passed in futile attempts at reconciliation between Charles de Blois and the Count de Montfort; but they agreed at length to a truce, at Chateauneuf de la Noë, in the month of August, 1362, to continue until the feast of St. Michael, in the following year. The object of Charles, in agreeing to this truce, appears to have been only to gain time, in order to assemble his forces, and put himself in a better posture of defence: for, when the Count de Montfort, too lightly trusting to the declarations of his rival, had disbanded his troops,* the latter hastened to procure aid from the king of France, and to make new levies of all the nobles and knights of the province who adhered to his cause, among whom was Bertrand du Guesclin. Early the next year Charles was enabled to bring a considerable force into the field, and lay siege at the same time to Carhaix and Roche-aux-Anes, both of which he took during the continuance of the truce; and then, uniting his forces, he proceeded to lay siege to Becherel, a place of importance, from its strength and its situation in the vicinity of Dinan.†

To oppose these insidious attempts of Charles de Blois, the Count de Montfort soon collected a considerable body of men, and among the leaders were Sir John Chandos, Sir Robert Knolles, John Harpeden, and Walter Huet, with a

* The Count de Montfort had collected a considerable force by means of the sum of sixty-four thousand nobles, which he had borrowed from the king of England.—*Actes de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. cols. 1553, 1554.

† Guillaume de St. André, vv. 655, 708.

number of knights, and a strong body of English archers.* With these forces he took the field, and, by superior generalship, speedily gained an advantage over his opponent, by enclosing him between the castle of Becherel and his own troops. Charles, by this movement, was reduced to great distress for the want of provisions; and, therefore, as the only means of extricating himself from his embarrassments, he sent to offer battle to his rival. The proposition was accepted by De Montfort; but as the place where the hostile forces were then encamped was not suitable for an engagement, it was suggested by one of the parties, and agreed to by the other, that they should settle their quarrel in the Lande d'Evrau.†

The two armies were just about to join battle at the place fixed on, when a bishop came up, and interfered successfully in preventing the effusion of blood. By his mediation a conference was held, and an agreement was entered into, by which the province of Brittany was to be divided between the claimants into two equal parts: certain towns were to be surrendered by each of the parties, and, to insure the full performance of the treaty, hostages were to be delivered up on both sides. Among the hostages, on the part of Charles de Blois, was Bertrand du Guesclin.‡ The contracting parties took an oath to assemble at the "Half-way Oak," between Castle Joscelin and Ploermel, in order to carry out the provisions of the treaty, but they did not meet; and this, like all other agreements and conferences for the pacification of Brittany, ended without producing any permanently beneficial result.§

* Cuvelier, vv. 2752, 2763.

† Guil. de St. André, vv. 789, 874.

‡ Cuvelier, vv. 2803, 2815.

§ Guil. de St. André, v. 941; and *Entrevue de Charles de Blois et Jean de Montfort à Poitiers*, in the *Actes de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. col. 1565.

One result, however, of the treaty of the Lande d'Evrau was, that it gave occasion to a serious quarrel between Bertrand du Guesclin and an English knight, Sir William Felton, one of the arbiters who drew up the treaty on the part of the Count de Montfort. Sir William Felton asserted that Bertrand, as one of the hostages given up by Charles de Blois to the Count de Montfort, had promised to remain on parole, in the place appointed by the count, until the town of Nantes should be surrendered, in conformity with the treaty; that by the indulgence of his keeper, Sir Robert Knolles, Du Guesclin was permitted to wander at pleasure during the day, though required to return at night; but that he had abused the privilege, and broken his pledge, by going with a squire of Sir Robert Knolles' to Vitré, a villa belonging to the Lord de Laval, and refusing to return.

Bertrand du Guesclin, hearing of these charges, sent word by his squire, Jean de Bigot, to inform Sir William Felton that, if any one asserted that he had not kept his word as a hostage, faithfully and legally, as he had promised to do, he was ready to defend himself by judicial combat against the charge. Upon this denial, Sir William Felton sent Du Guesclin a formal challenge, to the following effect:—

"Mons. BERTRAN DU GUESCLIN.

"I have heard through your squire, Jean de Bigot, that "you have, or should have said, that if any one would affirm "that you have not loyally kept your pledge, on account of "the treaty for the pacification of Brittany, as you promised "to do, on the day that my Lord de Montfort Duke of "Brittany and Sir Charles de Blois met to decide the con- "test for the duchy of Brittany, or that you were held to "keep yourself as a hostage for more than a month, that "you would defend yourself before your judges: Wherefore

"I assert that you did promise, on the said day, by the faith "of your body, and enter yourself as a hostage, that you "would remain there, until the town of Nantes should be "delivered up to my Lord de Montfort, Duke of Brittany, "or until you should have the sanction of my said lord to "go away: which faith and pledge you have not loyally kept, "but have falsely failed so to do; and this I am ready, by "the aid of God, to prove by my body against you, as a "knight should do, before my lord the king of France. "Witness my seal affixed to this schedule, and put there the "23 day of November, 1363.

"GUILLEAUME DE FELTOUN."

To this challenge, Du Guesclin replied as follows:—

"To Monsieur GUILLEAUME DE FELTOUN.

"I give you notice that, with the aid of God, I will be "before my lord the king of France on the Tuesday before "Mid-Lent next, if he is in the kingdom of France; and in "case that he is not, I will be, with the aid of God, before "my lord the Duke of Normandy on that day: and as to "what you say or have said, that I should have remained as "a hostage for more than a month, or until the town of "Nantes was delivered up to the Count de Montfort, and "that I have falsely kept my faith and pledge, in case that "you wish to maintain the contrary against me, that I will "declare and maintain in my leal defence that you have "basely lied; and I will be there, if God pleases, ready to "keep and defend my honour and state against you. And "as I wish to be in no long debate with you, I give you "notice, once for all, by these letters, sealed with my seal, "the 9th day of December, 1363.

"BERTRAN DU GUESCLIN."

In this state the matter was brought before the parliament of Paris, which, in the absence of King John, then in England, was composed of the dauphin, the king of Cyprus, and a number of prelates, dukes, barons, and knights; "also many clerks and laics belonging to the king's council, as well as other persons."

The pleadings, reported at length in Latin, were conducted by the advocates of the two parties. On the part of Sir William Felton, the charges contained in his challenge were reiterated and amplified; to which it was added, that Bertrand du Guesclin, by violating his pledge, had broken the peace of Brittany, and that, in consequence, murder, conflagration, and robbery of religious persons and houses, and an infinitude of irreparable evils, had been committed; and, therefore, that Bertrand, being the cause and occasion of these calamities, should suffer death: "since it is expressly provided by the civil law that a knight (*miles*), the disturber of the peace, is punished capitally."* And he concluded by declaring that, if Bertrand should acknowledge the charges, he ought to be punished with death; but, if he should deny them, in that event, the appellant, with his own body, as a good and faithful knight, would appear on a certain day, and at a place to be appointed by the dauphin, with horse and arms, against Bertrand du Gues-

* The advocate of Sir William Felton cited correctly, in his argument, the passage of the civil law from *Paulus, libro v. Sententiarum*: "*Miles turbator pacis capite punitur.*"—See *Corpus Juris Civilis*, dig. xlix. tit. xvi.; *De re Militari*, ch. xvi. This reference to the civil law, as an existing recognised code, is a notable illustration of what De Savigny has devoted so much labour and research to prove—that the Roman Law was *not revived* by the discovery of a copy of the Pandects at Amalphi; that it never ceased to exist, as an active binding code of laws, during the Middle Ages; and that it was cited in the tribunals, and held by the courts as the great public law of that period.—*Histoire du Droit Romain au Moyen Age*, tom. i. and ii. *passim*, and tom. iii. ch. xviii.

clin, by wager of battle ; and thereupon Sir William Felton threw down his gage before the court; adding, that if not by wager of battle, at least by war, which is allowed by the nobles.

On the part of Du Guesclin, it was replied, that his life had been passed in praiseworthy and honourable deeds, and that he would suffer any kind of death sooner than violate his word for any earthly object ; that, when he swore to observe the conditions of the treaty between Charles de Blois and the Count de Montfort, he was not alone, but that there were more than two hundred knights and squires present; that, when he was selected as a hostage, he said expressly to the Count de Montfort, in the presence of his council, that whatever stipulations the others might make, he could only remain for one month; that he was received on that condition; that he had remained as a hostage during the entire month ; and that he went away, not in the company of a single squire, as alleged, but with a number of knights, as one who had fully discharged his obligations, and not secretly, but openly.

As to the wager of battle, it was contended that, by the ordinances of Philip the Fair, before any one, whatever may be his state or rank, can be permitted to demand the wager of battle, four expressed and concurrent conditions are required :—" First, that the act with which the accused is charged must be a capital offence, and, if proved or confessed, should be punished with death; secondly, that the act must be consistent, and appear to have been committed; thirdly, that it cannot be proved by witnesses ; and, fourthly, that the person accused of the offence must be notoriously and publicly defamed by it." That in this case, not only not all, but not one of the four conditions had been fulfilled ; and that, consequently, by the use and custom of parliament, no wager of battle could be adjudged in the cause. That

the difference between the wager of battle (*duellum*) and war (*bellum*), as alleged on the part of Sir William Felton, was never proposed, seen, or heard of before, and, in consequence, should not now be heard or received: as the wager of battle, according to its true signification and import, is a combat between two persons only, judicially permitted to engage in fight; but it is termed *war*, when kings, dukes, counts, barons, and other nobles, who are permitted by royal privilege, or ancient and approved customs, for the defence of a country, to make war on each other. That he did not decline the wager of battle through any fear of death or dread of a personal conflict with Sir William Felton, to which mode of adjustment his mind greatly leaned; but, repressing his first emotions by the advice and judgment of those wiser than himself, he had submitted his conduct, in a matter of so much importance, under God, to the guidance of his friends. That Sir William Felton should be forced to retract with his own mouth the falsehoods which he had uttered against him, and be condemned to pay as damages one hundred thousand Parisian livres. That, in case these demands were not granted, and that the wager of battle, by the counsel of the king and court of parliament, should be adjudged, he declared that Sir William Felton, in his charges against him, had falsely and basely lied; and that, upon a day and at a place to be appointed by the parliament, he would defend himself by wager of battle or war against his accuser, with horse and arms, like a faithful and loyal knight, as he had always been. In conclusion, Du Guesclin, in person, declared publicly, before the whole parliament, that all which had been asserted for him was true; that he could confirm it by noble and faithful witnesses; and he was ready to maintain it by wager of battle, or by any other way or mode that the king or dauphin might appoint.

When the pleadings were ended, the parliament decreed:

"That the wager of battle did not fall on such charges; and that Bertrand du Guesclin was not entitled to damages against William Felton."*

* See *Jugement rendu par Charles Dauphin de Viennois sur le different meu entre Bertrand du Guesclin et Guillaume Felton.—Actes de Bretagne*, tom. i. col. 1566. Both Cuvelier and the anonymous author of the *Chronique de Du Guesclin* give full details of the dispute with Sir William Felton; but both differ so materially from the proceedings before the parliament of Paris, that neither has been relied on for any facts mentioned by them.

CHAPTER XII.

Bertrand du Guesclin takes the castles of Pestivieu and Trougof in Brittany. The king of France returns to England, where he dies. Character of John. Charles the Bad declares war against the king of France. Du Guesclin takes the towns of Mantes and Meulan from the Navarrese, and the castle of Rolleboise.

AFTER the judgment on the wager of battle had been pronounced by the parliament of Paris, which was rendered on the 28th of February, 1364, Bertrand du Guesclin returned to Brittany to arrange his affairs before repairing to Normandy, to take charge of his government at Pontorson.* Passing through the town of Guingamp, where he halted for a few moments to refresh himself and his men, he was received by the citizens with the greatest demonstrations of joy, and warmly pressed to remain with them, and deliver their town from the constant attacks of the garrisons of Pestivieu and Trougof, from which they suffered intolerable evils. Bertrand was greatly moved by their entreaties; but he was unwilling then to comply with their request, as he was anxious to lose no time in arresting the ravages of the English and Navarrese in Normandy. The citizens of Guingamp, however, were not easily diverted from an object which they had so much at heart, and, therefore, just as

* Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 302.

Bertrand and his men were mounted and prepared to leave the town, the gates were closed, and the bridges raised. Astonished at such treatment from the hands of his friends, Bertrand angrily demanded the motive of their conduct. They replied by again begging him not to desert them: for such, they said, was their confidence in his ability and good fortune, that, with his aid, the English garrison would soon be defeated; and they concluded by offering him sixty thousand livres as a recompense for his services.

Bertrand yielded at length to their entreaties, and returned to his inn amid the general joy of the citizens, whom he ordered at once "to prepare their tents and cross-bows, and make ample provision of fresh meat, bread, and good salt bacon, with beer and wine." He collected a force of six thousand men, both horse and foot, and ordered an assault on the castle of Pestivieu to be made the next morning. The order was obeyed with the utmost alacrity, and, though the garrison made a gallant defence, all resistance was unavailing against the skill and impetuosity of the attack; and the castellan offered to surrender, on the condition that his life was spared. Bertrand not only granted the request, against the remonstrances of the citizens of Guingamp, but permitted him to continue as governor of the castle, holding it of his conqueror, as a recompense for the valour he had shown in its defence.*

The neighbouring castle of Trougof, as soon as it was known that Bertrand du Guesclin was about to attack it, was already conquered through the superstitions of its castellan. It was commanded by an Englishman named Thomelin, who, immediately on hearing that Pestivieu had been taken by Bertrand, gave up all for lost, and declared that he would now certainly lose his own castle, which he

* Cuvelier, vv. 2948, 3273.

had held uninterruptedly for fifteen years. The rude castellan had found, among other booty, in the treasury of the castle, a copy of "The Prophecies of Merlin," and he was accustomed to amuse the vacant hours of castle-life by its frequent perusal. When he was about to be besieged, he remembered that he had read in the Prophecies that a knight, born in Little Britain, would come, bearing an eagle on his shield, who would rule without restraint over all the country where he lived. The eagle, which Du Guesclin bore as a device on his shield, supplied an easy interpretation of the prophecy to the superstitious mind of Thomelin; and the castle was surrendered at the first summons, without a blow being struck in its defence.*

The king of France was not present, as already mentioned, at the trial between Bertrand du Guesclin and Sir William Felton. John probably found little in the condition of his kingdom to make his residence there very agreeable to him. The great body of his people had been wholly disappointed in the relief which they expected on his return from captivity: for John was unable or unwilling to struggle with the difficulties which presented themselves to him on every side, and he seemed disposed to fly from or shut his eyes to the evils which he could not remedy. During the year 1363, these evils had reached a point when they appeared no longer endurable: for the Free Companies had been suffered to extend their predatory excursions to almost every portion of France; scarcity of food prevailed everywhere, from the insecurity of life and property; and a fearful mortality, the result of want, misery, and hopelessness, swept off large numbers of the population at Paris and elsewhere throughout the kingdom.†

* Cuvelier, vv. 3277, 3430. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, chap. xxiii.

† "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 226.

In the early part of the year 1364, John proposed to return to England on a visit to Edward III., and he assembled a part of his council to advise with him as to the propriety of the step. The members of his council, without exception, urgently entreated their master not to place himself again in the power of the king of England; but John, who always adhered to the declaration made during the early part of his reign, that he would have no one master in France but himself, resolved to take no advice contrary to his own wishes, declaring that he had full confidence in the fidelity, honour, and courtesy of the king of England and his family. He stated, as an additional reason for the expedition, his desire to make an excuse for his son the Duke of Anjou, who had broken his parole and returned to France;* and, on that occasion, he is said to have uttered the noble maxim, that *if justice and good faith were banished from the rest of the world, they should still be found in the mouth and heart of kings.* John, however, was not long in England before he sickened, and died at the palace of the Savoy, in London, the 8th of April of the same year.†

The reign of John was an almost unbroken succession of calamitous events. The peace of the kingdom was continually disturbed, and the kingdom itself brought to the verge of destruction by disastrous foreign wars, fatal civil dissensions, famine, treason, insurrections of the populace, and the ravages of the Free Companies; and, to add to the general confusion and distress, during more than a fourth of his reign the king himself was a prisoner, and his vicegerent was a youth without experience or authority. As a prince, John was not remarkable either for great virtues or

* The Last Continuator of Nangis assigns the non-payment of his own ransom as one of the motives of John's return to England, and he adds :—*Aliqui vero dicebant quod illuc iverat causa joci.*—Tom. ii. p. 333.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 468, 470.

great defects. In his temper, he was quick and irascible; in his purposes, self-willed and inflexible; in person, he was large and well-formed. He was brave, although he possessed none of the qualifications for a leader of armies; and he was just, frank, and honourable.

A short time before the death of the king of France, and while he was in England, Charles the Bad, then in Navarre, after making alliances with the king of Arragon, and some of the great barons and lords who held a large portion of Normandy, defied the king of France and the dauphin, and declared war against them. The detention of the duchy of Burgundy, which John took possession of upon the death of Philippe de Rouvre, the last duke,* was the pretext for this declaration of war. As soon as the dauphin was informed that the king of Navarre had taken this step, he sent into Normandy some armed nobles, among whom were the Count d'Auxerre, accompanied by his own vassals, and Bertrand du Guesclin, with troops composed nearly equally of French and Bretons. The leaders, after uniting their forces, marched towards Mantes, a town pleasantly situated on the river Seine, and surrounded with very strong walls, and with a high castle and bridge.†

Bertrand du Guesclin, with a large body of men,‡ before proceeding to lay siege to Mantes, first made an attempt to take Rolleboise by assault. Rolleboise was a very strong castle on the river Seine, about a league from Mantes, and at that time was garrisoned by a body of men-at-arms be-

* John succeeded to the duchy of Burgundy by right of propinquity to Philippe, who died in the year 1357.—Barante, *Hist. des Ducs de Bourgogne*, tom. i. p. 100.

† "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 335, 337.

‡ Cuvelier says ten thousand men came from Rouen, v. 3698; and, in the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, it is stated that more than ten thousand laid siege to Rolleboise, ch. xxvi. p. 17.

longing to the Free Companies, who made war on their own account, under a leader who was a native of Brussels, named Walter von Straten, an expert man-at-arms, who retained them at a fixed pay. He and his men had pillaged the whole surrounding country, and "no one dared to go from Paris to Mantes, nor from Mantes to Rouen or Pontoise, for fear of the garrison of Rolleboise." These daring free-booters were indifferent whom they attacked. They treated the people of the king of Navarre in the same manner as the French; and they kept the citizens of Mantes so closely confined, that the latter did not dare to issue out of their gates, but were more afraid of the garrison of Rolleboise than of the French troops.*

While Bertrand du Guesclin was before Rolleboise, a French knight, Sir Guillaume de Launoy, planned an attack on Mantes, by which the town could be entered without much difficulty or loss of life. The suggestion met with the approbation of Bertrand, and the scheme was put into execution without delay. De Launoy took thirty of his men, and clothed them like the vine-dressers of the neighbourhood, with their coats of mail, and their swords and daggers, concealed under coarse outer garments. The men were instructed to hold themselves in readiness to enter the town early the next morning, as soon as the gates should be opened, while De Launoy would place himself in concealment, but near enough to aid them; and Bertrand, upon the entrance being effected, should bring up his forces and take the town. In the meantime, by the order of Bertrand, another body of thirty lances, well-armed, entered the town on horseback, and pretended that they belonged to the forces of the king of Navarre. They all lodged at the same inn, paid with ready money for what they got, and, to add to the deception, uttered loud threats

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 471.

against the dauphin. After midnight De Launoy got up, armed himself and his men, and proceeded on foot to put his scheme into execution. A drizzling rain fell during the night, which made it very dark, and objects were but imperfectly seen even after dawn.

There was a custom at that time, in the town of Mantes, to disband the watch at sunrise, when four of the citizens were required, after opening the gates, in order to let out the cattle, sheep, and hogs into an adjoining meadow, to close them again. On this occasion, there was one wicket open, and the gate left half-closed. At sunrise, when the four citizens came to open the gates of the town, which was surrounded by vineyards,* they saw the pretended vine-dressers, with their pruning-knives in their hands, on the main causeway, advancing towards the town; but, suspecting nothing, and being reassured by their appearance and dress, the citizens withdrew to the guard-room to deposit their armour, and then opened the gates to let out the cattle. Ten of the besiegers effected their entrance without challenge, and they were soon followed by the rest of the party. While one of them gave a signal on a cornet† to apprise De Launoy of

* "Et environ soleil levant approucherent Mantes, où grant vignoble siet."—*Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxvii. p. 17. The vineyards around Mantes were of long standing, as Ordericus Vitalis states that William the Conqueror, in the year 1087, entered Mantes with his troops without resistance on the part of the citizens, "who had gone out to see the devastations which Ascelin Goël had made the day before the king's arrival, by burning the standing corn and rooting up the vines."—Liv. vii. ch. xiv.

† Cuvelier says that this cornet was called *turelure* in many countries :—

> "Un cornet y avoit d'une euvre manovrée,
> Qui *turelure* a non en tant maintes contrée :
> Icelle turelure fu haultment sonnée."

It has been suggested that the word *turelure* is perhaps the original of the refrain *Robin turelure* in many vaudevilles. See Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part ii. p. 21, note (2).

their successful entrance, the others, drawing their swords, fell upon the four citizens at the gate, who instantly fled, crying out loudly, "Treason! treason!" in order to arouse the still sleeping inhabitants of the town. De Launoy, hearing the signal, came forth from his place of concealment, and passed the gates, without resistance, with his troops. About the same moment, the thirty lances, who were quartered in the town, joined their comrades, while the dismayed citizens fled in terror to a fortified church within the walls. Bertrand du Guesclin, the Count d'Auxerre, and other knights, with about five hundred men, on being informed by a messenger that the gates were open, mounted their horses, entered the town, and rode towards the church, shouting their war-cry, "Launoy! Launoy!" which had been agreed upon. The citizens threw down upon their enemies mortars and pestles from above, as they passed along the streets. The town, however, soon surrendered, and it was pillaged by a part of the invaders. Bertrand then attacked the church, where the great body of citizens had assembled, drove the occupants into the steeple, when they also surrendered.*

Mantes was taken on the 7th of April, 1364.† Immediately after the surrender, Bertrand du Guesclin assembled the citizens, and told them that they who were unwilling to take the oath of fealty to the dauphin should instantly leave the town with their wives and children alone, without carrying any property with them; but they all agreed to take

* Cuvelier, vv. 3698, 3868, and "MS. of the Arsenal," pp. 136, 138, 139. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxvii. Froissart narrates very differently the means employed to take the town, liv. i. part ii. p. 472. The Last Continuator of Nangis says it was taken, *non vi armorum sed per cautelam*, tom. ii. p. 336.

† Secousse, *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, part ii. p. 15, citing the *Chroniques de St. Denis*, fol. 199, col. i.; "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 357.

the prescribed oath, on the condition that Meulan should be besieged also. Bertrand proposed to lay siege to that town without delay; but he was overruled by the other leaders; and it was decided that the attack should first be made on the castle of Rolleboise. This castle offered no resistance to the French: for the castellan—afraid, after the fall of Mantes, to risk an assault—surrendered upon the payment of a sum of money.*

The town of Meulan was next besieged. The defence was spirited; but the garrison was unable to withstand the impetuosity of the assault. Bertrand battered down the gates with his own hand, and entered the town at the head of his troops; whereupon a portion of the inhabitants took refuge in the tower, which was strongly fortified, and supplied with provisions for a siege of fifteen months. The castellan was so confident of the strength of the place, that, upon the summons of Bertrand to yield it, he coolly replied, "You must learn to fly, before you can lodge in this tower." Irritated by the contemptuous tone of the castellan, Bertrand ordered an immediate assault; but, as it was without success, he resolved to undermine the walls of the tower. The miners, protected by the soldiers, worked unperceived by the besieged, until the foundations of the tower were reached. As the earth was removed from beneath the walls, the miners propped it up by strong scantling and large beams, which they greased with lard, to render them more combustible; and, upon the orders of Bertrand, set them on fire. When the timbers were partly burnt, and the tower began to lean

* "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 357. The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Sire Bertrand du Guesclin* says, the citizens of Mantes insisted on besieging Meulan, "because they had the most of their heritages in that town." He differs from the Last Continuator of Nangis, Cuvelier, and Froissart, in stating that Rolleboise was taken by assault, chap. xxvii. p. 18.

to one side, the occupants, seeing the danger of their situation, surrendered as prisoners of war. While Bertrand was engaged in the reduction of the tower, the Count d'Auxerre took a fortified bridge, in which many of the inhabitants of the town had taken refuge. After the surrender of the town, the tower was demolished, and the fortified bridge strengthened, into which a strong garrison was placed. The leaders, with their troops, then separated; and Bertrand went to Pontorson to visit his wife, where he remained during the dead season.*

* Cuvelier, vv. 3870, 4052, and "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 141, 145, 146, 147; *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxviii. p. 18; "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 336. Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 47, 472, gives a circumstantial account of the taking of Mantes and Meulan; but he differs in almost every particular from the other contemporary authorities. He, however, confirms the statement of the Last Continuator of Nangis and Cuvelier, that Rolleboise surrendered upon the payment of a sum of money, which he sets down at about five thousand or six thousand francs. "The dead season:" *la morte saison*, so called from the stagnation of business at certain seasons of the year.—Bescherelle, voc. *Mort.*

CHAPTER XIII.

Battle of Cocherel, between the French under Bertrand du Guesclin, and the Navarrese under the Captal de Buch. Victory of the French.

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN was not long permitted to remain quiet at Pontorson; for, immediately after the surrender of Mantes and Meulan, he was summoned to take the field against the celebrated Jean de Grailli, the Captal, or Lord, de Buch,* who had recently landed at Cherbourg, with a force of four hundred men-at-arms, for the purpose of commencing hostile operations in Normandy on the part of Charles the Bad against the young king of France. The death of John gave a new impulse to the designs of the king of Navarre, who both hated and despised his successor; and the subsequent military operations in Normandy would necessarily be of the greatest consequence to both parties, and especially to Charles V., as the success or failure of the first acts of

* "D'Achery (in his *Spicilegium*) printed on the margin *Capital de Buch.* Froissart and the *Grand Chronicles* have it *Captal de Buch.* The name of this person was Jean de Grailli. He owned the lordship of Teste (Tête) de Buch, now a village in the department of the Gironde. It is from thence that he derived the surname by which he is most generally known, *Dominus Capitis de Buch.*"—Note by H. Géraud, editor of the Chronicle of *Guillaume de Nangis*, tom. ii. p. 341, note (1).

his administration would strengthen or remove an impression of his bad fortune and want of vigour, which was not confined to Charles the Bad. Acting on the belief, then, that the king would be as easy to contend with as the regent had been, the king of Navarre levied troops from all quarters; and, among others, engaged the services of Sir John Jouel,* an English knight of reputation, then in Normandy, with some two or three hundred men-at-arms under his command.

Charles the Bad was extremely irritated at the loss of the towns of Mantes and Meulan, and expressed his dissatisfaction with the young king of France to the Captal de Buch, who promised not only to recover the lost towns, but to take others; adding, that as King Charles was about to go to Rheims to be crowned, he would follow and attack him, and annoy him to the utmost of his ability.† To accomplish

* Barnes calls him Sir John Jones.—"Hist. Edward III.," p. 641.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 473. Christine de Pisan says:—"When Charles left Paris to go to Rheims, to be crowned king of France, there assembled nearly three thousand men-at-arms, who started towards Vernon, and thought to pass the Seine, and endeavour to prevent the coronation of Charles."—*Fais et Bonnes Meurs du Sage Roy Charles*, part ii. ch. iv.

Du Chastelet states—but, as usual, without citing any authority—"that the king of Navarre, in a familiar conversation with a party of friends, spoke of Du Guesclin, of the great feats he had performed—above all, of the capture of Rolleboise and Mantes, and the siege of Meulan; and added that, while he was in the service of the king of France, no one could make war against him but with disadvantage. The captal, who was a Gascon, and consequently abrupt and confident, said to the king of Navarre:—'I will bring him to you, bound hand and foot, before the end of a month.' 'My cousin,' replied the king, 'you are brave, and *greatly* devoted to my interests, and I am sure you will always deport yourself like a true man; but, although this Breton is not as sprightly as we Gascons, he is not as easy to take as you say, and you will have your hands full in doing it. Neglect nothing against him: for you will need all your force and address, not only in attacking

this design, the captal assembled his forces in the city of Evreux, where he levied the greater part of his archers and foot-soldiers. After completing all his arrangements, he left the city with the purpose of ascertaining the position and numbers of the French army. Upon a review of his troops, he found that he could muster seven hundred lances, three hundred archers, and five hundred other effective men.

While marching from Evreux towards Pacy, and using every means to obtain information of the movements of the French, the captal met, by chance, a herald called King Falcon, who had left the French army the same morning. As soon as he saw him, the captal recognised him as the herald of the king of England, and inquired whence he came, and if he had any news of the French.

"In the name of God! my lord, yes," said the herald; "I parted this morning from them and their army; they seek you also, and have great desire to find you."

"And where are they?" asked the captal. "Are they on this or the other side of Pont de l'Arche?"

"In the name of God!" replied Falcon, "they have passed Pont de l'Arche and Vernon, and they are now, I believe, quite near Pacy."

"How many men have they?" again asked the captal, "and what captains?"

"In the name of God, sir!" said the herald, "they are fully fifteen hundred combatants, and all good men-at-arms. So there are Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, who has the greatest number of Bretons; the Count d'Auxerre; the Vicount de Beaumont; Sir Louis de Chalons; the Lord de Beaujeu; my lord the Master of the Cross-bows; the Arch-priest; and Sir Odouart de Renty. And also there are of Gascony, your

him, but in defending yourself.' 'I will not have a chance to make the trial,' said the captal, 'as soon as I desire it.' "—*Histoire de Du Guesclin*, liv. ii. p. 63.

country, the people of the Lord d'Albret, Sir Petiton de Curton, Sir Perducas d'Albret, Sir Aymon de Pommiers, and the Souldich de l'Estrade." *

"Falcon! Falcon!" said the captal, reddening with anger, on hearing the Gascons named, "is it really true what you say, that these Gascon knights whom you have mentioned are there, and the people of Lord d'Albret also?"

"Sir!" said the herald, "by my faith, yes."

"And where is Lord d'Albret?" inquired the captal.

"In the name of God! sir," replied Falcon, "he is at Paris with the regent, the Duke of Normandy, who is making great preparations to go to Rheims: for it is said everywhere that on the next Sunday he will be crowned."

"By the cap of St. Anthony!" said the captal, putting his hand to his head, as if in anger, "Gascons will prove themselves against Gascons."

Falcon then alluded to Peter, a herald whom the arch-priest had sent there, and said to the captal:—

"My lord, a herald is waiting for me, quite near this place, who is anxious to speak to you."

"Falcon! Falcon!" quickly answered the captal, "say to this French herald that he has no business here; and let him tell his master, the arch-priest, that I will have no parley with him."

"Sir, why not?" asked Sir John Jouel, coming forward; "this may be for our profit."

"John, John! it is not," impatiently replied the captal: "for the arch-priest is so crafty, that, if he comes to us with his chit-chat and pleasantries, he will spy out and discover

* Souldich was a title of dignity near Bordeaux, in Aquitaine; and Du Cange says *Soldicus* was synonymous with *Syndicus*, *defensor*, *patronus*, *advocatus*. This title was confined to two noble families of L'Estrade and La Trau.—Gloss. voc. *Syndicus*.

our force and people, and so it might turn out to our great loss; I have, therefore, no desire for his grand speeches."

Falcon then returned to his companion, Peter, whom he found waiting for him on the side of a hedge, and excused the captal well and wisely, so that the French herald was quite satisfied, and afterwards reported to the arch-priest what Falcon had told him.

The Captal de Buch, on hearing Falcon's estimate of the French forces, that they amounted to fully fifteen hundred men-at-arms, immediately despatched messengers back to the governor at Evreux, ordering him to send armed men of every description, and direct them to report at Cocherel, for there he expected to find the French. The governor, as soon as he could collect and prepare them, sent forward one hundred and twenty young men-at-arms.*

While the captal was collecting his troops at Evreux, Bertrand du Guesclin set out from Rouen, with a well-appointed force of archers and men-at-arms, and crossed the Seine at Pont de l'Arche, where he halted for a short time, that his men might have their horses shod. Here the merchants brought supplies of arms, such as battle-axes, swords, and daggers, which they readily sold to those who were unprovided with them. From this place couriers were sent throughout the country, to ascertain where the Captal de Buch and the Navarrese were, with orders to report at Cocherel.

After leaving Pont de l'Arche, Bertrand reviewed his troops,† and, before dismissing them, addressed them in these words: "My children, you should first have the desire

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 475, 476.

† According to Cuvelier, the forces of the French amounted to 1100. This number included only the men-at-arms, without estimating the other kind of troops, such as archers and foot-soldiers.—"MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 152. The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Sire Bertrand du Guesclin* estimates the French forces at 6000 combatants, and those of the Navarrese at one-third more, ch. xxx. xxxii.

to acquire glory from the holy heavens, which is the reward of those who risk their lives in the defence of their king and country. Now, if there is one among you who feels himself in any mortal sin, I advise him to go at once and confess it." This pious exhortation of their leader produced the effect designed upon the soldiers: for many of them went to the church of the Cordeliers, near Pont de l'Arche, and confessed themselves. After the review, the army servants, who had been sent out to forage, brought back into camp a number of axes, such as were used by the wood-cutters of the country, which the soldiers took from them, saying, "These axes are better to strike with than swords." *

From Pont de l'Arche Bertrand du Guesclin marched his army to the Croix St. Lieuffroy,† and lodged his troops in the abbey. He received at this place the report of his couriers, that the Captal de Buch, with thirteen hundred men-at-arms, had left Evreux; but they could obtain no further information about them. Bertrand dismissed the couriers, with an imperative order to find the enemy, and report, as before, at Cocherel on the Eure, where he designed to throw himself in the way of the Navarrese, and frustrate their purpose of passing that river, then crossing the Seine at Vernon, and marching into the Isle of France. Before leaving the abbey of St. Lieuffroy, he again addressed his troops, in these words:—

"If there is a coward among you, or any one who is afraid of his skin, I give him free leave to go home: for in brief space, I know, we shall have battle; but if any one,

* Cuvelier, "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 152, 153.

† The Cross of St. Leufroi, between Evreux and Gaillon, in the diocese of Evreux, was a "monastery called *La Croix d'Helton*, where we read that Leudfred, the glorious confessor of Christ, served the Lord forty-eight years, in the reigns of Childebert and Chilperic."—Ordericus Vitalis, lib. iv. ch. viii. and note (1).

whether young or old, runs away without leave, he shall certainly be hanged."

"No, no, Bertrand," his men replied; "we have no calf's heart among us: we will all live or die with you, on this meadow."

Bertrand then left the abbey, and marched to Cocherel, a little hamlet on the river Eure, surrounded by a vineyard and extensive meadows, where he drew up his men in order of battle near the bridge, as he knew that the Navarrese must pass that way. Here his couriers again reported that they were unable to find the enemy. As Bertrand knew, from the time when the Captal de Buch had left Evreux, that the Navarrese could not be very distant, he said, sneeringly, to his couriers:—"If I had searched myself, I doubt not that I would have found the army of the captal; but you know much better how to find a huge chest or coffer filled with jewels, and to pillage them, than to find the English: for I dare swear that they are not farther from us now than a league and a half."

The arch-priest, who was unwilling to fight the Navarrese,* took advantage of the second failure of the French couriers to procure the assent of the leaders of the army to his wish to go out with his men, under a promise to obtain more certain information of the position and numbers of the enemy; but he had scarcely left the field, when a herald arrived in the French camp to announce that the Navarrese were approaching.†

* Sir Arnold de Cervole, commonly called the arch-priest, was a mercenary leader of the *Free Companies*, who, as he had served every party, was unwilling to meet some of the leaders on the opposite side, and especially the Captal de Buch, under whom he held lands. See Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 480; and *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxxi.

† Cuvelier, vv. 4157, 4263; and "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. pp. 154, 156.

As soon as the Navarrese appeared in sight of the French, they took advantage of an eminence, with a wood adjoining, on their right, and formed themselves in three divisions, in order of battle, with their front on the edge of the hill. The first of these divisions was commanded by Sir John Jouel, with the English archers and men-at-arms; the second by the Captal de Buch; and the third by the Bascon de Mareuil. The pennon of the Captal de Buch was placed on a strong thorny bush, with sixty men-at-arms to guard it, that it might serve as a rallying point to his men, if they should become scattered during the combat.

Though prepared to resist the attack of the Navarrese, the French had not yet selected their commander for the day, agreed on the war-cry they should use, or on the banner to which they should retreat. In selecting a leader, their first choice fell on the young Count d'Auxerre, on account of his birth and rank; but he modestly, and at the same time firmly, excused himself, saying "that he was too young to be charged with so great an enterprise, and one of so much honour; that this would be the first pitched battle in which he had ever been engaged; that there were many other good knights, as Lord Bertrand and others, who knew much better how such affairs should be conducted than he did; that he would be their companion, and live or die with them; but the command he would not take." They then chose for a leader Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, "as the best knight on the field, as one who had been in the greatest number of combats, and who also best knew how such things should be managed." It was then decided, with one accord, that they should cry, "*Notre Dame, Guesclin!* and that everything on that day should be ordered by him."*

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 476, 478.

The French were ranged in order of battle, like their opponents, in three divisions. The first was commanded by Bertrand du Guesclin, the second by the Count d'Auxerre, and the third by the Green Knight, Lord Louis de Chalons, in the absence of the arch-priest; while the Gascon troops, under the command of the Gascon leaders, were held in reserve.

The Navarrese, secure in their advantageous position on the hill, and amply supplied with provisions, resolved to await the attack of the French; while the latter, who had thrown themselves suddenly in the way of their opponents, and in the country of the enemy, were greatly straitened for want of food, and, therefore, were very anxious to bring on an engagement. As the French leader knew what would be the probable result of an attack on the Navarrese in their strong position, he kept his men under arms all day, prepared only to act on the defensive, in the hope that the enemy would descend and assail him; but, as he waited in vain, he assembled the leaders of his army at sunset, and, after a conference with them, sent a herald to the Captal de Buch, to say that Bertrand du Guesclin wished to know whether the Navarrese desired to have battle or not; that, if they did, a suitable place would be selected the next morning, three bow-shots from the river; but, if they would not appoint the time and place for a fight, the herald added that he was instructed by Bertrand to challenge either the captal, Pierre de Sequainville, or Sir John Jouel, to meet him and run three courses with the lance; that the party defeated should either select a place for the battle between the two armies, or abandon the field and return home. To this challenge the captal replied:—"I know Bertrand well, and what he wants; but tell him he shall have battle when the proper day comes, and I will descend when I please—but it is not yet time."

Bertrand was forced to content himself with this reply to his message, as he could get no other; and the two armies remained in the same position for two entire days, when it became necessary for the French commander to make some change, as his troops were reduced to such straits for want of food, that they were compelled "to eat horse-flesh instead of mutton." They therefore adopted, without hesitation, an expedient suggested by Bertrand, to draw down the Navarrese from the hill. By his order, the French all armed themselves, and mounted their horses, as if with the design of passing the river in flight, but prepared to return, on a concerted signal, with banners displayed, and attack their opponents as soon as they should descend from their position. The manœuvre was executed as ordered by Bertrand, and it succeeded in completely deceiving the Captal de Buch, who, when he was informed that the French had retired from the field, asked, in surprise, "Are they gone? I would not have believed that Bertrand would ever deign to turn his back on any place;" and, when he saw the French passing the river, he said, "We must descend; and to-day we will see Bertrand du Guesclin so humbled, that he will never dare to show his face again to his prince."

Great was the joy in the camp of the Navarrese when they saw Bertrand fly from a field which he had himself chosen; but Mancion de Blancbourg, a Breton, who both hated and feared Du Guesclin, because he had slain one of his kinsmen at Forgeray Castle, and vanquished another in a joust at Rennes, said to Sir John Jouel:—

"Never believe me again, if Bertrand does not turn back as soon as we approach him."

"You are a great fool to speak thus," angrily replied the Englishman. "If you are afraid of him, do not put your foot there. They who have no money have no business at the market."

On the other side, Bertrand du Guesclin was equally pleased to witness the success of his stratagem; and said to Thibaut du Pont, a trusty squire, "We stretch the nets; behold, the birds are taken: they all fly right." He then ordered the trumpets to be sounded, when his men instantly turned back with a shout. They were soon dismounted and ranged in order of battle.

The Captal de Buch was completely deceived by the manœuvre, and he would willingly have regained his former position on the hill; but it was then too late: he therefore determined to put the best face on the matter, exhorted his men not to be dismayed, but to fight bravely, for they outnumbered their opponents by more than a hundred men; and, in conclusion, said, "Let us take a sop in wine, for we know not when we shall all drink together again; but I assure you, I go to contend for my life: no one shall take me like a flying hare."

When the leaders on both sides had formed their troops, on foot, in order of battle, the Captal de Buch, seeing that his men were dispirited by losing the advantage of position, and finding that the hill behind them cut off their retreat in case of need, sent a herald to Bertrand du Guesclin, to say that the Captal de Buch, and the other leaders of the Navarrese, had sent to offer him their wines at his pleasure, for they knew that he and his men had little either to eat or drink; besides, there was no need of battle; and, therefore, if he would, he might retire unmolested, and they would do the same.

To this the herald added:—

"Fair lords, will you take this counsel? for here you may well lose more than you can gain."

"Gentle herald," replied Bertrand, "you know very well how to preach, and for this discourse I will give you a courser and a hundred florins; but say to those who sent

you, that we will certainly go to them if they do not come first." *

While these events were passing, a fierce contest ensued among the servants and horse-boys of the two armies—carried on with daggers, knives, and sticks—which resulted in the discomfiture of the servants of the Navarrese, and which was construed by Bertrand as a happy augury of the result of the approaching battle. When, now, both armies were drawn up, and ready to engage, an English squire, with the consent of the Captal de Buch, came out of the ranks, and inquired if there was any one in the French army who desired to run three courses with the lance against him. The challenge was eagerly accepted by a number of knights and squires; but Bertrand selected a squire named Roland du Bois, an expert man-at-arms, for the adventure. Both the champions were soon mounted and prepared for the onset. They ran but one course, for in it both were wounded: De Bois was hurt under the arm; but his thrust was so well directed, and given with such force, that his lance pierced through the shield, hauberk, and buckram hacqueton of the English squire, and he was thrown from his horse, with a severe wound. He was removed from the field by the army servants; and Roland du Bois returned to his ranks with the horse of the vanquished squire.

The battle then commenced, on the part of the French,

* Cuvelier adds to the above reply of Bertrand these strange words:—

"Que du Castal de Buef mengeray i. quartier,
Ne je ne pense anuit autre char à mengier;"

which greatly astonished the herald, and which he interpreted to mean:—

"Que tous les fraiz Bertran et ses hommes de pris
Paieroit le Capstal s'il pouvoit estre pris."

But may not Bertrand have intended a play on the name of the captal, *Buef* for *bœuf*?—Cuvelier, v. 4568; and "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 169.

with this additional augury of success on one side, and ill-omen on the other; but nothing tended to abate the fury of the combatants as they met in the midst of the field. The Captal de Buch, well seconded by Sir John Jouel, Pierre de Sequainville, the Bascon de Mareuil, and many others, performed prodigies of valour; but they were met with equal skill, courage, and constancy by Bertrand du Guesclin himself, the Count d'Auxerre, the Green Knight, the Vicomte de Beaumont, and Baldwin de Leus, Sire d'Aunequin, the leader of the cross-bows. Both parties, as they advanced to the attack, uttered their respective war-cries—"St. George, Navarre!" and "Notre Dame, Guesclin!" Sir Thibaut du Pont, with a two-handed sword, fell upon the Navarrese "like a madman," until his sword was broken in the *mêlée*, when he seized a battle-axe—brought to him by a Breton servant—and with it he gave an English knight such a blow that his gorget and coat of mail availed him nothing. Bertrand, witnessing the feats of his countryman, shouted his war-cry, and exclaimed:—

"Forward, my friends, the victory will be ours! Remember that to-day we have a new king in France, and let us make him a coronation present."

"Bertrand du Guesclin!" cried out the Bascon de Mareuil, on the other side, "where have you gone? You thought this morning that you had found chickens; it had been better for you to have accepted our terms."

When Bertrand heard the defiance, he attacked the Bascon "like a maned lion;" and the latter was beaten down and severely wounded in the contest. He was, however, succoured by his comrades, and was soon again in the midst of the combat, where he slew Baldwin d'Aunequin, the leader of the cross-bows. The death of the Sire d'Aunequin was a serious loss to his party; but it was soon avenged: for the Count d'Auxerre and the Green Knight assailed the

Bascon with great fury, and he fell under their blows.* Sir John Jouel, who was not behind him in feats of valour, was mortally wounded about the same time. On the part of the French, besides the leader of the cross-bows, the Vicomte de Beaumont and a large number of valiant squires were slain. Robert de Bournonville, who was knighted on the field for his gallant feats of arms, also lost his life in his efforts to maintain the reputation he had won. The victory, which had long remained doubtful, was at length decided in favour of the French, by a movement skilfully executed by Sir Eustace de la Hussoie. This knight, with two hundred good lances, by the order of Du Guesclin,† attacked the Navarrese in the rear, with great slaughter. The Captal de Buch saw this movement, but could do nothing to prevent its effects, as he was sorely pressed by Bertrand in front. His opponents at length closed in upon him, when the captal was reduced to the defence of his own person; and manfully did he sustain on this occasion the reputation which he had won on many a well-fought field: for, with a dagger, he laid about him on all sides with such fury that "he looked like a devil from hell;" but Thibaut du Pont seized him by the collar of his hauberk, and called upon him to surrender. Bertrand also called out to him, "Captal, surrender, or you are a dead man." The captal then gave his hand as a token of his compliance.‡ Sir Pierre de Sequainville also surren-

* The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Du Guesclin* says that the Bascon was slain by a squire named Oliver Ferron, ch. xxxiii.

† The Last Continuator of Nangis says this detachment was commanded by Du Guesclin in person.—"Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 343.

‡ Froissart states that the Captal de Buch was taken prisoner, and carried off from the field by thirty Gascons, specially detailed for that purpose, liv. i. part ii. p. 481. But the captal, in an original paper, preserved in the *Trésor des Chartes*, differs from Froissart, Cuvelier, and the Last Continuator of Nangis, and says:—"At the battle of Cocherel, Roland Bodin, Esquire, had taken me, and I was his loyal prisoner." &c.

dered at the same time; when the combat ceased, as all the Navarrese were either slain or made prisoners.

The French hoped, after a victory so complete, that they would have some repose; but they were scarcely assured of their triumph when they were informed that a fresh body of men was marching against them, which consisted of one hundred and twenty lances, led by a squire from the town of Nouancourt, near Pacy. Bertrand, after disarming his prisoners, for fear of an attack from them, ordered his men to advance against the fresh troops. The Navarrese made but a feeble resistance: for they were soon surrounded, and nearly all of them slain. From the field of Cocherel Bertrand du Guesclin led his victorious but famished army, first to Pont de l'Arche—where Sir John Jouel, the English knight, died of his wounds on entering the town—and afterwards to Rouen.*

—*Recueil sur Charles II., Roy de Navarre*, by Secousse, p. 211; and Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 85, *verso*, and *Inventaire*, p. 93, *recto.*

* Cuvelier, vv. 4292, 4905. In most of the incidents of the battle of Cocherel, Froissart differs from Cuvelier and the other contemporary authorities; although his description of the battle is, in many respects, the finest passage of his chronicles. The account of Cuvelier has been chiefly followed, as the most detailed, clear, and conclusive; besides having the merit of being more fully sustained by the other chroniclers. See *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxx. xxxiii., and "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. pp. 341, 344.

CHAPTER XIV

Results of the battle of Cocherel. Coronation of Charles V. Character of Charles. Success of Bertrand du Guesclin in Normandy. He goes to the assistance of Charles de Blois in Brittany. Battle of Auray. Defeat of the French, and capture of Du Guesclin.

THE battle of Cocherel was fought on Thursday, the 16th of May, 1364. The fortunate issue of that combat was an event too unusual and important, during the previous administration of the young king of France, to allow the communication to be delayed for an instant: letters, therefore, were immediately despatched to Rheims, whither Charles had gone to be crowned, conveying the very welcome intelligence. As the coronation took place on the following Sunday, the 19th of May,* the news of the capture of the Captal de Buch, with

* These dates are taken from an *Extrait du Mémorial D. de la Chambre des Comptes* at Paris, published by M. Secousse, in *Recueil des Pièces sur Charles II., Roy de Navarre*, p. 196. The *Chroniques de St. Denis* also give the 16th of May as the date of the battle. See *Hist. de Charles le Mauvais*, by Secousse, part ii. p. 53. Du Tillet, in *Recueil des Roys de France*, p. 157, and in his *Chronique Abrégée*, p. 66, *verso*, says Charles was crowned the 19th of May; but, in his *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 85, *verso*, he says the battle of Cocherel was fought "on the 24th of May; and on the following Sunday the king was crowned at Rheims." In *L'Art de Vérifier les Dates*, it is stated:—"Charles V., born at Vincennes, on the 21st of January, 1337

the slaughter and surrender of the rest of his army, was received before the ceremony on that joyful occasion; and it was as Bertrand du Guesclin had declared on the field of battle, that such a victory would be a worthy coronation present.

Charles was in his twenty-seventh year when he came to the throne. In person he was tall and well-formed; his face was handsome, though somewhat long; his forehead was high and broad; his eyes were of good size, well-seated, brown in colour, and fixed in their expression; his nose was sufficiently high, his mouth not too small, and his lips were thin; his hair was neither blonde nor black; his skin was clear brown, and his complexion rather pale. In his deportment he was reflective, self-possessed, and sedate; and he was temperate in all things. His appearance was striking: he had a manly voice of good tone, and his speech was well-considered, concise, and correct.* With such advantages of person and character, Charles ascended the throne, after eight years of preparation, through a succession of calamitous events, which gave him a clear view of the difficulties before him; of the elements of opposition, both foreign and domestic, that he had to contend with; of the character and designs of his enemies, and of the instruments which he had to use. Without military talents, or the desire for military distinction in that warlike age—for he never put on armour again after the fatal day of Poitiers—he had the sagacity to discern, and the firmness to employ, the

(N.S.), succeeded his father on the 8th of April, 1364, and was crowned at Rheims, the 19th of May ensuing, on the Feast of the Trinity. Three days before—on Thursday, the 16th of the same month—Bertrand du Guesclin had defeated, at Cocherel, on the river Eure, between Evreux and Vernon, the English and Navarrese, commanded by the Captal de Buch, Jean de Grailli, who was taken prisoner." Tom vi. *sub anno* 1364.

* *Le Livre des Fais du Sage Roy Charles*, by Christine de Pisan, partie i. ch. vii. et xvi.

most competent military agents, when found even among the people, and to put them over the highest heads in the kingdom. He adopted his measures with caution, but he executed them with vigour, and thereby acquired from his contemporaries the appellation of *The Wise*. one of the highest titles, and, probably, one of the best merited, in the long list of French monarchs.

After his coronation Charles returned to Paris, and then went immediately to Rouen, to meet Bertrand du Guesclin and the troops, to whom he owed the victory at Cocherel. The Captal de Buch was sent to Meaux, as a prisoner; but, as Pierre de Sequainville was his subject, the king ordered him to be beheaded for treason. Charles showed the liveliest gratitude towards those to whom he was indebted for the successful issue of the battle; and to Bertrand du Guesclin, whose reputation was greatly increased by the event, he gave the county of Longueville, in Normandy,* and created him maréchal of that duchy. The castle of Longueville was garrisoned by Navarrese, who refused to receive him as their lord; but Bertrand soon took steps to reduce them to subjection.†

* Cuvelier, v. 35, says :—

"Donna lui Longueville la Giffard, se creez."

Walter Giffard, Lord de Longueville, accompanied William the Conqueror on his expedition into England, and distinguished himself at the battle of Hastings, for which he was created Earl of Buckingham. The designation of the gift, by the chronicler, as *Longueville la Giffard*, is therefore the true one. See Ordericus Vitalis, lib. iii. ch. xiv. note (1), lib. iv. ch. vii., and lib. vi. ch. vii. The gift is dated the 27th of May, 1364, ten days after the battle. The letters by which Charles V gave to Bertrand du Guesclin the county of Longueville, which had been confiscated as the property of the king of Navarre, were preserved in the *Chambre des Comptes* at Paris. They contain many curious clauses; and they have been published by Secousse, in *Recueil de Pièces sur Charles II., Roy de Navarre*, p. 192; and by Du Chastelet, in *Preuves de Du Guesclin*, p. 297.

† Cuvelier, vv. 4968, 4998.

The king, on his return to Paris, received daily complaints of the ravages committed by the garrisons of the fortresses in Normandy, in Caux, Perche, and Beauce,* some of which belonged to the king of Navarre, and the others were held by the leaders of the Free Companies. To provide a remedy for these evils, the king of France sent his brother, the Duke of Burgundy, into the territory where these fortresses were situated, who first assembled his forces at the town of Chartres ; when, finding that his army amounted to five thousand combatants, he separated it into three divisions, and with the first he besieged and took the castles of Marceranville, Camerolles, Druez, Bruex, and Counay, in Beauce, and retook from the Navarrese the town of Charité-sur-Loire. The second division, under Sir Jean de la Rivière, laid siege to the castle of Acquigny, in the county of Evreux, which surrendered after a protracted defence. Bertrand du Guesclin, with the third division, consisting chiefly of the troops which he commanded at the battle of Cocherel, went into the Cotentin, to guard the frontiers of Normandy, on that quarter, from the incursions of the Navarrese.†

While on his way to lay siege to Valougnes, his vanguard, under Sir Guillaume Boitel, was attacked by a body of men in ambush ; but the assailants were defeated, and one hundred and forty of their number slain. The rest fled, and took refuge in the town of Valougnes, crying, "Close the gates quickly ! here comes this devil Bertrand, who never takes ransom." Many of the inhabitants, on hearing the name of the Breton knight, fled to the woods, while the others entered confusedly into the castle. Bertrand met with little or no resistance on his approach to the town; but the castle

* Caux is the present department of the *Seine Inférieure*, Perche is the present department of the *Orne*, and Beauce is now *Eure et Loire*.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 484, 488. The Cotentin is the present department of the *Manche*.

was well fortified, and the garrison had great confidence in the strength of an ancient tower, built in the time of Clovis. Du Guesclin first attempted to take the castle by assault; but it was so well defended that, finding it could not be carried by that means, he brought from the town of St. Lo six engines used for throwing stones, and erected them against the walls of the castle. The garrison, on the other side, placed mattresses, bundles of hay, and hurdles within the castle and upon the towers and lodgments, to break the force of the missiles; and they stationed a watchman, upon a very high tower, to give a signal with a bell whenever the engines were at work. Upon the sound of the bell the garrison withdrew to a place of safety until the stone had fallen, when some of them, in derision, sallied out and wiped the place where the stone had struck with a towel. Bertrand, perceiving that his engines made no impression on the walls, then resorted to a mine; but, as the castle was found to be built upon a rock, that expedient also failed; he thereupon repeated the assault, which was again unsuccessful.

In the meanwhile the castellan, having learnt that the French leaders had taken an oath to remain before the place until it surrendered, and, fearing for his life if the castle should be carried by assault, determined, in concert with the garrison, to capitulate. He presented himself on the ramparts, and proposed to Bertrand du Guesclin, who approached the fosses on horseback, that he would surrender the castle for the sum of thirty thousand florins. Bertrand, without hesitation, rejected the offer, and declared to the governor that he would remain a year before the place, sooner than pay him a denier; and reiterated his threat, that if the castle was taken by storm, he and his men should all be hanged. After some deliberation, the garrison offered to surrender, saving their lives and goods. The proposition was accepted; and the next morning the garrison left the castle, loaded

with their most valuable effects, and took the road, some to Cherbourg, and the others to St. Sauveur.

When the French troops saw the garrison marching out of the castle, they began to hoot at and deride them. Eight squires in full armour, irritated at the insult, re-entered the castle, with the determination to perish sooner than surrender, and closed the gates. Bertrand was extremely irritated at this act, and exclaimed, "Open the gate! by what thousand devils have you returned!" The squires, who knew that they had provisions sufficient to last them for ten months, said, in reply, that they would defend the castle to the last extremity, and that he should not enter it while they had anything to eat. To which Bertrand answered, "You lie, villains: for this evening I will sup there, and you shall fast." The castle, by his order, was then assailed on all sides; but the squires defended themselves valiantly with cross-bows and stones. Ladders were erected against the wall, and the besiegers endeavoured to pierce it with picks and mattocks; but it was so high and thick that it resisted all their efforts. At length they broke down a strong iron door, and entered the tower. The squires still continued to defend themselves, until, overpowered by numbers, they were seized and thrown headlong down from the top of the tower.*

While Bertrand du Guesclin was before Valougnes, Oliver de Manny laid siege to Carentan, which surrendered after a feeble resistance. Bertrand then proceeded to besiege Pont de Doune, a walled town, with a church strongly fortified, and surrounded by a deep ditch; but, before proceeding to the attack, he sent for the governor of Carentan, and asked him in what way he could best take the town. Pierre Ledoulz, the governor, told him that he need do nothing

* Cuvelier, vv. 5013, 5261; and *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxxv. xxxvi.

more than make the attack, shouting his war-cry, "Guesclin!" and that the cry would strike more terror into the garrison than the shouts of a thousand Frenchmen. To this counsel Bertrand modestly replied: "You are mistaken in what you say; it is not so: notwithstanding, the assault shall be made without delay." The town was commanded by Sir Hugh Calverly, an English knight of high military reputation, with a body of Norman soldiers, who defended it with great valour, so that all the assaults proved unsuccessful. Bertrand then had recourse to a mine, which he designed to be carried under the walls and beneath the church. The work was difficult and protracted; but it was executed with such secrecy, that the besieged were for a long time unconscious of its progress, until one day, while some soldiers of the garrison were at dinner, a glass full of wine being placed on a window, just over the part of the wall where the miners were at work, the glass shook, and some of the wine was spilled. The garrison thus found out that the besiegers were undermining the wall. The governor then resorted to a counter-mine; and the work was directed with such precision, that the two mining parties found themselves directly opposite to each other. The French miners immediately gave information of their situation to their leader, Bertrand du Guesclin, who descended himself into the mine with a hundred men, ordered his miners to cut through the tongue of earth which separated the two parties, slew the miners of the garrison, and entered the church, shouting his war-cry, "Guesclin!" The besieged were so completely surprised, that they surrendered without making the slightest resistance. Bertrand, after placing his banner on the ramparts, summoned all the prisoners into his presence, in a large hall. He spared the lives of the governor, Sir Hugh Calverly, and the English; but the Normans and Navarrese were beheaded in the market-place. After dinner, Bertrand divided the

booty, acquired from the plunder of the town, among his followers, and then made preparation to lay siege to St. Sauveur le Vicomte; but, while making ready for the expedition, he received a letter from Charles de Blois, requesting him to come with all his forces and assist in raising the siege of Auray, in Brittany.*

The king of France sent at the same time a force of one thousand lances to the aid of Charles de Blois, as he perceived how important it was, not only to the interests of his kinsman, but his own, that the Count de Montfort and his English auxiliaries should not be permitted to acquire the possession of Brittany. The king also wrote to Sir Bertrand du Guesclin to go to the assistance of De Blois, and ordered the Maréchal de Boucicault to take the place of Du Guesclin, in guarding the frontiers of Normandy.† The Count de Montfort, after taking the castles of Sucenio and Roche-Périon, laid siege to Auray, "which was his own heritage." While engaged in besieging the castle, for he had already entered the town without resistance, he received a letter from Charles V., ordering him to raise the siege of Auray, and inviting him to come to Paris, and he should receive full justice at his hands. De Montfort agreed to obey the king's order, on the condition that the fortress should be sequestered into the hands of the Lords de Clisson and De Beaumanoir until the judgment could be rendered; but the king would only accept of unconditional compliance, and both parties went on with their preparations to decide their differences by the sword.‡

As soon as De Montfort heard that Charles de Blois was collecting forces from France and Normandy, he sent into

* Cuvelier, vv. 5264, 5374; and "MS. of the Arsenal," tom. i. p. 195. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxxvii.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 489.

‡ Guillaume de St. André, vv. 990, 1059, 1136.

Aquitaine to beseech the English knights and squires in that province, and especially Sir John Chandos, to come and aid him in his great need, and to inform them "that he expected in Brittany great feats of arms, which all lords, knights, and squires, to advance their honour, would willingly hear of." Sir John Chandos obtained, without difficulty, the consent of Edward the Black Prince to go to the assistance of the Count de Montfort, and took with him two hundred lances and as many archers. He was joyfully received, not only by the count, but by De Clisson, Knolles, and the other leaders, "who thought that no evil could ever befall them while they had Sir John Chandos in their company." When the English forces were joined to those of the Count de Montfort, the aggregate amounted to sixteen hundred knights and squires, and from eight to nine hundred archers.*

Charles de Blois ordered his troops to assemble, first at Guingamp, from whence he marched to castle Josselin, and where, upon reviewing his forces, he found that they amounted to four thousand combatants,† among whom were Bertrand du Guesclin, the Count d'Auxerre and his brother, the Green Knight,‡ the Viscount de Rohan, Lord de Beaumanoir, Sir Eustace de la Houssoie, Oliver de Manny, Charles de Dinan, Guillaume de Launoy, and many other distinguished knights. While De Blois was still at castle Josselin, a herald came to him from the Count de Montfort, by the advice of Sir John Chandos, to propose

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 489.

† Froissart says they amounted to twenty-five hundred lances, with those that came from France, liv. i. part ii. p. 490. Men-at-arms and archers were then regarded as the only effective troops. The undisciplined and variously armed infantry, as they were of little service in the combat, were seldom estimated in the accounts of battles at that period.

‡ Louis de Chalons, surnamed the Green Knight.

that both parties should meet, and adjust their differences without a resort to arms; and Charles, if he had not been controlled by a will superior to his own, would gladly have acceded to any fair settlement of claims, which had already cost his country more than twenty years of war. It was proposed by the Count de Montfort that each claimant should hold one-half of the duchy of Brittany, with the title of duke during life; and that, if the Count de Montfort should leave no legal heir male surviving him, the whole duchy should descend to the heirs of Charles de Blois; but the offer was rejected with disdain by the high-spirited Countess de Blois; and the leaders of his army, whom Charles had called into consultation, regarded the simple reception of a proposition to treat for the partition of the duchy as implying a doubt of his own title, and they construed the action of the opposite party as the result of fear for the issue of the contest. To this view Bertrand du Guesclin also inclined; and his suggestion was adopted, to answer the proposition to treat for the partition of the duchy by giving notice to De Montfort to raise the siege of Auray castle within four days, or prepare for battle.*

From castle Josselin Charles de Blois first marched his army to the abbey of Louvaux, and then took a position in an enclosed park near the town of Auray. The park was only separated from the town by a small stream, into which the tide flowed, and a meadow which extended up to the walls. The Count de Montfort, when he saw that Charles de Blois was approaching, marched his troops out of the town, and formed them in an adjoining plain, in order of battle. The count was anxious to bring on an engagement without delay; but Lord de Clisson advised him to defer it

* Cuvelier, vv. 5412, 5625; Guillaume de St. André, v. 1175; and *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxxviii.

until the next morning, and await the attack which had been threatened; adding, that the position of the enemy in the park was a very advantageous one, which could not be assailed without great peril, and, besides, they would be reproached for attacking an enemy when wearied and broken down by a long march. Sir Robert Knolles, on hearing the counsel offered by De Clisson, said:—

"You speak well; and, if they were out of the park, I would advise an immediate attack: for I see plainly that they outnumber us two to one."

"In my judgment," replied De Clisson, "still it would be disreputable to attack them, travel-worn as they are: for we would gain less honour than to fight them on a day fixed. As to their greater numbers, I do not regard that at all: I rather wish that they were as many more, because there is often much disorder in very large assemblages of men in battle. It would be better for a prince to have fifteen hundred skilful men-at-arms to execute his will, and he could more easily keep them in order than three thousand. But let neither more nor less be done on account of my words, as I am ready to engage in whatever it may please the other knights to do."

This advice of Lord de Clisson was adopted by Sir John Chandos, who, on account of a skirmish between the valets of the two armies, in which those of Charles de Blois had the advantage, and an attempt of the archers of both parties to gain the ford over the rivulet, issued an order that no one, under the penalty of death, should leave the ranks. To this order he added also his advice to the Count de Montfort that he should not make the attack, but wait for the enemy to begin the battle.*

* Cuvelier, vv. 5800, 5832; *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxxviii.

On Saturday, the 28th of September, 1364, Charles de Blois, with the aid and counsel of Bertrand du Guesclin, arranged his army in order of battle, and separated it into three divisions and a rear-guard. The first division was commanded by Du Guesclin, the second by the Counts d'Auxerre and De Joigny, and the third and most numerous division by Charles de Blois, who had with him a number of the great barons of Brittany. Lord de Roye commanded the rear-guard. In each of these divisions there were about one thousand combatants. The same order was observed by Sir John Chandos in arranging the troops of the Count de Montfort. He placed Sir Robert Knolles in command of the first division, Lord Oliver de Clisson over the second, and the young Count de Montfort, under his own direction, over the third. In each division there were five hundred men-at-arms and three hundred archers. When he came to appoint a leader over the reserve, he called Sir Hugh Calverly, and said to him :—

" Sir Hugh, you will take command of the rear-guard, and will have five hundred combatants under you ; and you must keep yourself on the wings, and never move from your position, on any account, unless you see our battalions give way or open from any cause, and then you must advance and support them. You cannot perform, to-day, any better exploit."

Sir Hugh Calverly was greatly mortified at an appointment which he thought implied a want of confidence in his will or ability to take a position of greater danger ; and he angrily said :—

" Sir, give this rear-guard to another, for I do not wish to bother myself with it. Dear sir," he continued, in a more subdued tone, " in what manner or state have you seen me disadvantageously, that I am not as well prepared to combat with the first as any other ? "

"Sir Hugh," replied Chandos, "I did not appoint you over the reserve because you are not one of the best knights of our army: for I know well that you would very willingly fight in the front ranks; but I ordered you to that position because you are a wise and prudent knight, and it is necessary that such a one should accept it. So I earnestly entreat you to do so; and I promise, if you will do it, that it will be better for us all, and you will yourself acquire higher honour by it; and, moreover, I promise you that the very first request you may ask me I will grant."

Sir Hugh Calverly still obstinately persisted in his refusal, and begged, with joined hands, and for God's sake, that the charge should be given to another. Whereupon Sir John Chandos, affected almost to tears by such obstinacy, firmly, but kindly, said:—

"Sir Hugh, either you or I must do it: now think whom it will best suit."

"Surely, sir," replied Calverly, confounded at these last words, "I know that you would require of me nothing that would turn to my dishonour; and I will do it cheerfully, since it is thus." *

During the night a strict watch was kept up by the French at the ford over the rivulet which divided the two armies. The detachment composing this night-guard contained a number of good cross-bowmen, under the command of Sir Guillaume de Launoy, who kept watch along the rivulet, with lanterns and firebrands, until daylight, when the signal on horn and trumpet aroused the men to prepare for battle.†

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 491, 492.

† Cuvelier, vv. 5853, 5864. Guillaume de St. André says that the Count de Montfort wished to defer the engagement until the next day, out of respect for Sunday, but that Charles would not consent to it, vv. 1201, 1244.

Early on this Sunday morning preparations were made in both armies for the combat. In both many masses were said, and all took the communion who desired it. Lord de Beaumanoir, a noble Breton, in the service of Charles de Blois, who, the day before, had made an effort to adjust the differences of the two parties without a battle, and who only succeeded in procuring a respite for that day and the night following, went over to the army of the Count de Montfort, a little after sunrise, to make a last effort for peace. As soon as Sir John Chandos saw him, he came forward to meet him; and Lord de Beaumanoir, after a courteous salutation, said:—

"Sir John Chandos, I beg you, for God's sake, that we make peace between these two lords: for it would be a great pity if so many good men as I see here should fight each other merely to sustain their opinions."

"Lord de Beaumanoir," replied Sir John Chandos, who had entirely changed his opinions since his pacific offers had been rejected, "I advise you not to come here any more: for our people say that, if they can enclose you among them, they will put you to death; but say to my Lord Charles de Blois that, whatever may happen, my Lord John de Montfort wishes to fight, and get rid of all treaties of peace; and he says also, that this day he will be Duke of Brittany, or die on the field."

"Chandos! Chandos!" exclaimed De Beaumanoir, greatly irritated at these words, "my lord has as great desire to fight as my Lord John de Montfort, and so have all his people."

With this reply De Beaumanoir turned away, without saying another word, and returned to Charles de Blois and the Breton barons, who were waiting for him. On the other side, Sir John Chandos went to the Count de Montfort, who inquired, as he approached:—

"How goes the business? What says our adversary?"

"He sends you word," replied Sir John Chandos, "by the Lord de Beaumanoir, who has just gone, that he wishes to fight, however it may be; and he will become Duke of Brittany or be left on the field. Now decide what you will do, whether you wish to fight or not."

"By St. George!" exclaimed the Count de Montfort, "yes; and may God aid the right. Send forward our banners and archers."

When Lord de Beaumanoir joined Charles de Blois, on his return, he said:—

"Sire, by St. Ives! I heard the haughtiest words from Sir John Chandos that I have heard for a long time: he says that the Count de Montfort will remain Duke of Brittany, and he will show you that you have no right to it."

"God knows," said Charles, changing colour at these words, "to whom the right will be to-day."

The Breton barons responded after the same manner; and then the men-at-arms were ordered to march forward with the banners, "in the name of God and St. Ives!" *

It was necessary for Charles de Blois, who was impatient to commence the battle, to cross the rivulet which separated the two armies, in order to make the attack; but Bertrand du Guesclin earnestly advised against the step, in these words:—"My lord, if it would please you to remain in this enclosed park, keep your men in good order, and await the attack of the enemy, in my judgment, we will have the advantage over them. In brief, I do not advise that your army should pass beyond the rivulet." The other leaders were, however, of a different opinion; and Charles de Blois, adopting the counsel which corresponded with his own wishes, crossed the ford with banners and pennons dis-

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 493, 494.

played. His men, on foot, marched forward to the attack, in such close order that "an apple could not be thrown among them, without falling on a lance or a helmet." Each man-at-arms carried his lance straight before him, shortened to five feet; he bore a strong, sharp, and well-tempered battle-axe, with a short handle, at his side, or hanging from his neck; and "thus they marched forward, keeping the step—each leader at the head of his men, with banner or pennon before him, well advised of what he should do." On the other side, the troops of the Count de Montfort marched forward to the attack in the same good order.*

The battle then commenced on the proclamation of the heralds, who loudly cried out, "To-day we will witness courage and prowess!" This was succeeded by the sound of horns, trumpets, and musical instruments, when the archers and arbelists, on both sides, advanced to the front, and discharged their arrows; but the men-at-arms were so completely protected by their armour, that none of them were wounded by the shafts, and the archers then threw down their bows and withdrew to the rear of the men-at-arms, in their respective armies. Whereupon Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, with the Bretons under him, attacked the division commanded by Sir Robert Knolles and Walter Huet, and a desperate struggle with lances ensued. On both sides many gallant feats of arms were performed; many were taken and rescued; and, "if any one fell to the earth, he was not easily raised again, if he was not well succoured." Charles de Blois marched directly against the division commanded by the Count de Montfort. The latter had clothed a knight, one of his kinsmen, in his tunic, covered with the arms of Brittany, out of blind faith in the prophecies of

* *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xxxix.; and Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 494.

Merlin, which declared that there would be a grievous contest between two lords, who claimed the duchy of Brittany, in which the arms of Brittany would be discomfited. Charles de Blois was very anxious to meet this knight, who was reported as wearing the arms of Brittany, and he sought him everywhere throughout the field. At length they met, and De Blois attacked the knight with such force that he beat him down to the earth and slew him. Upon this a fiercely contested struggle ensued, in which the banner of the Count de Montfort was struck down by the Green Knight; and De Montfort, thinking that the battle was lost, was about to leave the field, when Sir Hugh Calverly, who had taken his position in the rear, to watch the course of events, skilfully executed the orders which he had received from Sir John Chandos, came speedily to the assistance of the count, raised again his prostrate banner, and restored his broken ranks.

The Count d'Auxerre, with the French knights and squires, attacked the division commanded by Lord de Clisson, who was aided by Sir Eustace d'Aubrecicourt, Sir Richard Burley, Sir Matthew Gournay, and others; when the battle became general, with the exception of the reserve under Calverly, which only took part when it was necessary to close up the broken ranks of the army of the Count de Montfort.*

On both sides great skill and endurance were shown by leaders and men. Both Charles de Blois and the Count de Montfort acquitted themselves as good knights. Sir John Chandos discharged the duties of an able general and a good

* Cuvelier, vv. 5887, 6154; Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 494, 495; and *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. xli. The anonymous author of the Chronicle says:—"Then Calverly made his battalion dismount from their horses to refresh themselves, and take off their thigh-armour, to enable them to fight better on horseback. He then made them remount, and gave battle-axes to each one."

soldier. He was tall of stature and strong of limb, and he struck such blows with his battle-axe that few dared to approach him. He was a wise and prudent knight, and he gave the best counsel to the Count de Montfort, telling him :—"Do thus and thus, or, go here or there;" and the young count implicitly trusted in him, and acted unhesitatingly by his advice.

On the same side, Lord de Clisson performed good service. He bravely and successfully sustained the attack of the Count d'Auxerre, during which the latter was struck in the left eye by the point of an axe, was otherwise severely wounded, and taken prisoner. Upon the loss of their leader, the division commanded by the Count d'Auxerre was defeated and put to flight. The other divisions, notwithstanding, continued the fight with great valour and constancy, although they did not keep in as good order as the forces of the Count de Montfort, who were greatly aided by the reserve under Sir Hugh Calverly. When the English and Bretons, under the Count de Montfort, saw the troops of Charles de Blois open their ranks and give way, many of them got their horses, mounted them, and prepared for the pursuit.

At this time Sir John Chandos, with a strong body of troops, attacked the division commanded by Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, "who was in the midst of the conflict like an enraged beast;" and, wet with sweat and blood, he assailed the English with a steel hammer, and "struck them down like dogs." Around him marvellous feats of arms were performed; but the ranks of his division were broken, and many good knights and squires had already fallen, when Sir John Chandos attacked him with fresh troops, both in front and rear, and he was beaten down to the earth. He was raised up and supported by De Houssoie, the Green Knight, and Charles de Dinan, who in the *mêlée* slew Sir Richard

Canterbury, a brother-in-law of Chandos. Du Guesclin, although he saw his men continually lessening around him by the numbers who were slain or who took to flight, continued the combat until he had neither axe, sword, nor other weapon, when he yielded himself a prisoner to an English squire, under the pennon of Sir John Chandos.*

The battle, in effect, was ended after the defeat of Bertrand's division: for the rest took to flight, except some Breton knights and squires, who would not abandon their master, Charles de Blois, choosing rather to die on the field than bear the reproach of desertion. They rallied around De Blois, and defended him to the last; but they were all borne down by force of numbers, for the great body of their enemies turned upon them. The banner of Charles was seized and thrown to the earth, and the standard-bearer slain. There was great slaughter over the fallen standard, and among those who fell were Charles de Blois himself, and a bastard son, named Jean de Blois, an expert man-at-arms, who avenged the death of his father by a mortal stroke against his assailant before he received his own death-wound.† In the pursuit which followed the battle there was great slaughter of knights and squires. The flower of the Breton chivalry was slain or taken, for very few men of note escaped, and only such as could recover their horses. The flight and pursuit continued for eight leagues.

Of the slain there were the Lords de Rochefort, Guer-

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 495, 496; Cuvelier, vv. 6160, 6279.

† The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Du Guesclin* states that Charles de Blois was taken prisoner during the battle, carried before De Montfort, and put to death by Bertrand Lazerac, by order of De Montfort, ch. xlii. xliii. This statement is not supported by any other chronicle or historical monument of that period. See *Hist. de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. p. 1005, note (63); *Sur le Mort de Charles de Blois*, and *Cession faite par Nicole de Bretagne à Louis XI.*, Janvier 3, 1347, in *Actes de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. iii. p. 343.

goulay, and Avangour, and above nine hundred men-at-arms. The Counts d'Auxerre and Joigny, Lords Rohan, Montfort, De Beaumanoir, Rais, and Reux, and Bertrand du Guesclin were taken prisoners, while only about twenty men were slain on the side of the Count de Montfort.*

After the battle was over the Count de Montfort, in the presence of a number of the leaders of his army, publicly thanked Sir John Chandos for the successful issue of the combat, which he justly attributed to his judgment and valour, and offered him, at the same time, a cup and a flagon full of wine, with these words:—"After God, I am under greater obligation to you than to the whole world." At this moment Lord de Clisson returned, all heated from the pursuit, at the head of his men, with a large number of prisoners.

The Count de Montfort was still ignorant of the fate of Charles de Blois, when two knights, accompanied by two heralds, who had been searching the field of battle to find out what men of rank had been slain, came up and reported that Charles was dead. Whatever may have been his real emotions at this announcement, the Count de Montfort exhibited the deepest sympathy and a becoming respect for the fate of his fallen rival: for he was affected even to tears on beholding the dead body of his late enemy, which he ordered to be reverently interred at Guingamp.†

The result of the battle of Auray, which ended so fatally to Charles de Blois, was probably due entirely to the disregard by him of the prudent counsel of Bertrand du Guesclin, not to abandon their strong position in the park, but to await the attack of the enemy. This battle was one of

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 496; Guil. de St. André, vv. 1411, 1446. The Last Continuator of Nangis estimates the number of killed and mortally wounded much higher, tom. ii. p. 352.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 499.

the most important events of that period: as, apart from its other consequences, it decided the long-contested question of the succession to the dukedom of Brittany, left vacant by John the Good, in the year 1341. As the various incidents of the fight have been somewhat minutely described, it may also be taken to represent the low point of depression to which the art of war had fallen at the middle of the fourteenth century. Men-at-arms were then considered as the only effective troops, and defensive armour had been carried to such a state of perfection, that it was not only proof against the arrow, but it afforded almost complete protection against the sword, the lance, and even the terrible battle-axe. There seemed to be little occasion for the display of skilful generalship, when the combat was reduced to a mere personal struggle, in which the strength and endurance of one side at length prevailed over the other, and the carnage took place, not on the field, but in the pursuit of the vanquished party. The divisions of the army commonly fought independently of each other, under the command of their respective leaders, and the contest was maintained as long as the banner of the chief was kept floating; for it often happened, as Froissart remarks at this battle, when the Count d'Auxerre fell, "that, when a discomfiture took place, the defeated were too easily alarmed; that when one fell, three fell; on three, ten; and on ten, thirty; and, if ten run away, a hundred will follow."

From their armour and equipments, the men-at-arms seemed to constitute the most effective cavalry that the world had ever known; yet they fought on foot* until one

* Morice, writing of the battle of Tinchebrai, in the year 1106, between Robert Courthose, Duke of Normandy, and his brother Henry I. of England, says:—"To render the parties equal, all the knights, except the Bretons, dismounted to fight on foot. This precaution seemed necessary to them, in order to preserve their lives: for, when a knight is

party was defeated, when the horses were used by the vanquished, who could recover them, for flight, and by the victors for pursuit. Anything like good order or proper discipline was so little known, or so seldom practised, that the confusion which invariably attended the conflict of arms was in proportion to the numbers engaged; and it justified the remark of Lord de Clisson, on the same occasion, that there was too often much disorder in large assemblages of men in battle, and that fifteen hundred men-at-arms who would execute the commands of their leaders would be worth more, and could be more easily kept in order, than three thousand. No other act of generalship was displayed at the battle of Auray than in the appointment of the reserve under Sir Hugh Calverly, who was expressly instructed not to attack the enemy, but to restore order and repair the broken ranks of his own party; and to the skilful execution of this order the Count de Montfort chiefly, if not entirely, owed the victory.*

thrown from his horse, he cannot raise himself, on account of the weight of his armour, and he is regarded as dead. It does not appear that this custom had been practised before this, but it became the common usage afterwards."—*Hist. de Bretagne*, tom. i. p. 86. And see Ordericus Vitalis, lib. xi. ch. xx.; Henry of Huntingdon, lib. vii.; and Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1106.

* Froissart is the only authority for the appointment by Bertrand du Guesclin of a reserve under Lord de Roye; but he is not mentioned anywhere by Froissart himself as taking part in the action.

CHAPTER XV

The treaty of Guerrande. Peace between the kings of France and Navarre. Release of the Captal de Buch. Release of Du Guesclin. The Free Companies.

THE castle of Auray surrendered to the Count de Montfort immediately after the battle. He then laid siege to the towns of Jugon and Dinan, which he also took, but after an obstinate resistance, and he then proceeded to besiege Quimper-Corentin. While he was before the last-mentioned place, the king of France, unwilling to drive De Montfort to extremities, force him to seek the aid of Edward III., and do homage to the king of England for the duchy of Brittany, by the advice of his council sent Jean de Craon, Archbishop of Rheims, and Jean de Maingre, called Boucicault, Maréchal of France, to negotiate a peace between De Montfort and Jeanne *la Boiteuse*, the widow of Charles de Blois.* On the part of

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 499, 500; *Actes de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. col. 1589. The anonymous author of the *Chronique de Du Guesclin*, chap. xlv., says that De Montfort first sent messengers to Charles V. to treat of peace, promising to do homage for the duchy; to which Charles replied, that he would advise with his council before answering. Of the diplomatic ability of the Maréchal de Boucicault, the same author, ch. xlvii., says:—"He was distinguished for great sense and chivalry, and especially renowned in his day for finding the best

the latter, the Bishop of Brieue, Lord de Beaumanoir, Guy de Rochefort, Lord d'Acerac, and Master Guy de Cleder, doctor of laws, were appointed commissioners to treat of peace.* De Montfort, unwilling to act without the knowledge and concurrence of Edward III., sent Lord Latimer to that monarch, who advised him to make ample provision for the Countess de Blois ; but, in any event, to keep possession of the entire duchy.†

During the conferences it was proposed by the Maréchal de Boucicault to divide the duchy of Brittany equally between the contending parties ; but De Montfort would in no wise assent even to entertain the proposition, in consequence of which the conferences were on the point of being broken off. They were, however, kept up till Lent, when the commissioners removed to Guerrande, "because they found at that place a great quantity of fish ;" and there the conferences were renewed, upon the prayers and supplications of the people of Brittany, who begged that a contest which had endured for twenty-three years should at length be ended.‡ New terms were proposed after the return of Lord Latimer from England, which were acceded to by both parties. By the

way of treating than any other; of whom it was said, in common parlance, throughout France, in his lifetime :—

"Assez plus vault en ung assault
Sainctré que ne fait Bouciquault,
Mais trop mieulx vault en ung traictie
Bouciquault que ne fait Sainctré."

Which may be almost literally rendered thus :—

For much more worth, in an assault,
Saintré is than Boucicault ;
But too much more, in a treaty,
Boucicault than is Saintré.

* *Actes de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. col. 1587.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 500.

‡ Guillaume de St. André, vv. 1510, 1565.

treaty, the Count de Montfort was declared Duke of Brittany, and, if he died without male issue, the duchy was to revert to the eldest son of the Countess de Blois; who should bear the title of Duchess of Brittany during life, hold the county of Penthièvre and the vicounty of Limoges, and receive a revenue of ten thousand livres on the lands of the Count de Montfort in France or Brittany, with an annuity of three thousand livres; and her sons Jean and Guy were to be delivered from prison at the expense of De Montfort.*

The treaty of Guerrande was signed on the 13th of April, 1365; and thus ended the long, sad, and bitter contest for the succession to the dukedom of Brittany. At this period the affairs of the restless Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, being in a very precarious condition, inclined him to peace. His army had been almost entirely destroyed at Cocherel; the Duke of Burgundy and Bertrand du Guesclin had taken the greater part of his towns in Normandy; Louis de Navarre, his brother, had not been able to keep the conquests which he had made; the Captal de Buch, the general of his forces, was a prisoner; and he had even made terms with the king of France, and restored to him certain places which he held. The king of Navarre was, therefore, not in a condition to resist the power of Charles V; and he well knew that, if he continued his opposition, he would be stripped the following year of all his possessions in France. In this extremity Queen Jeanne, widow of Charles the Fair, and aunt of the king of Navarre, and his sister, Queen Blanche, widow of Philippe de Valois, acted in concert with the Captal de Buch, to induce the king of France to listen to terms of peace.†

* See treaty of Guerrande, in *Actes de Bretagne*, by Morice, tom. i. col. 1587.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 501, and *Histoire de Charles le Mauvais* by Secousse, part ii. p. 70. "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 364.

The success of this negotiation led also to the discharge of the Captal de Buch, who had been a prisoner since the battle of Cocherel. He was not only acquitted without ransom, but Charles V gave him the handsome castle of Nemours, which, with its appendages, was worth three thousand francs of revenue. For these lands the captal did homage to the king, who was greatly pleased to have at his court a knight of such distinction. But his satisfaction was of short duration: for when the Captal de Buch returned to the court of Edward the Black Prince, and the latter was informed of his engagements with the king of France, the prince blamed him severely, and said that the captal could not loyally acquit himself of his services to two lords; and that he was too covetous in desiring to hold lands in France, where he was neither loved nor honoured. When the captal saw how coldly he was received, and how severely he was censured by the Prince of Wales, his natural lord, for the course he had pursued, he endeavoured to break the severity of the rebuke, by saying that he was not so closely bound to the king of France but that he could easily undo what had been done. Whereupon he sent by his own squire the renunciation of his homage to Charles V., gave up everything which he had received from the king of France, and ever afterwards continued in the service of the English with unshaken fidelity and devotion.*

After the battle of Auray, Bertrand du Guesclin had been removed to Niort, in Poitou, by Sir John Chandos; but, as the treaty of Guerrande had settled the long contest in Brittany, as the king of Navarre was now quieted by the late adjustment with Charles V., and as peace still continued between the crowns of France and England, there was no longer any pretext for detaining the prisoners taken in the

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 501, 502.

battle of Auray in custody. They were, in consequence, discharged on payment of a ransom, varying, according to the practice of the times, with their means and their reputation in war.* There is no evidence of what was paid by the other prisoners, but the ransom of Bertrand du Guesclin was fixed at the enormous sum of one hundred thousand francs. This exorbitant ransom was probably far beyond his ability to pay; but he was aided by Charles V., Pope Urban V., and Henry of Trastamara, who then desired to obtain the assistance of Bertrand in his contest with Peter the Cruel for the crown of Castile. Charles V., who seems not to have been a very generous monarch, to judge by the closeness and business nature of his money transactions with Bertrand and others, gave his aid with every precaution that was necessary to secure him from the smallest loss; for he only assumed to pay to Sir John Chandos forty thousand of the debt incurred by Bertrand, and secured himself by a mortgage on the county of Longueville and its appendages, to be foreclosed in less than two years, and be vested absolutely in the crown, if the money was not paid back within that time. To obtain such grudging aid, Bertrand was further bound to carry out of the kingdom the dreaded Free Companies, who had committed such fearful ravages in every part of France since the battle of Poitiers.†

Of all the evils that afflicted France during the fourteenth

* St. Palaye, in his *Mémoires sur l'Ancienne Chevalerie*, says the ransom was usually one year's revenue of the prisoners, tom. i. p. 263, and note (40).

† Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, p. 86, *recto*, and *Inventaire*, p. 93, *verso*; Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 504; Cuvelier, tom. ii.; *Pièces Justificatives*, Nos. V and VI., pp. 393, 394. Charles V., however, in the year 1372, did acquit Du Guesclin of the debt of 40,000 francs paid to Sir John Chandos, as well as the sum of 30,000 francs loaned him for his expedition into Spain. See *Quittace donnée au Connestable du Guesclin par le Roi*, in *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. ii. col. 61.

century, the incursions of the Free Companies were unquestionably the greatest. The insurrection of the *Jacquerie* was a temporary ebullition of popular hatred against the nobles, local in its effects, and soon suppressed; and even the dreadful invasions of the English under Edward III., though carried on with fire and sword, and followed by desolation, were of comparatively short duration, and the national industry effaced in time the ruin they had caused: but these formidable freebooters, under various leaders, spread themselves over all France; and for nine years they were the willing actors in any scene of bloodshed or plunder, and the fruitful authors of every evil that could be committed by rapacity, profusion, cruelty, or lust. Commencing immediately after the battle of Poitiers, at a moment of the greatest weakness to France, when the king was a prisoner, and the regent a minor without experience or popularity, when the nobles were without influence, and when the treasury was empty, and consisting of men accustomed to command and inured to war, they spread themselves so widely, and fixed themselves so deeply, on the soil of France, that it required the wisest counsel, and a period of stable government, to dislodge them.*

Sir Regnault de Cervole, a Gascon by birth, commonly called the arch-priest,† is mentioned, in the year 1357, as the

* Secousse, in his *Histoire de Charles le Mauvais*, says of them, "they may be compared to the *fillibusters* of America, though they do not appear to have carried as far as the latter intrepidity and cruelty." Partie i. p. 186.

† "Renaut de Cervole probably gained the surname of arch-priest from the possession of an arch-priesthood; it was not rare then to see the laity in possession of benefices and ecclesiastical dignities."—Buchon's note to Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 342. See Joinville's "Memoirs of St. Louis," and note by Du Cange, p. 422. Raynaldus styles him *Arnoldus de Servola, vulgariter archipresbyter de Verniis nominatus.—Annal. Eccles.*, 1365, § 5.

first leader of these celebrated Free Companies, under whom a large body of men-at-arms from all countries assembled, "who saw that their wages had failed since the king of France was a prisoner." They first marched towards Provence, where they scaled and took many fortified towns and castles, and pillaged the whole country to the very gates of Avignon. The pope and cardinals were so alarmed at the ravages of these brigands, that, having no other remedy, they made a treaty with them. The arch-priest was received "as reverently as if he had been the son of the king of France;" he dined many times at the palace of the pope and with the cardinals; he obtained full absolution for his sins; and, at his departure, received forty thousand crowns to be divided among his troops.* This notorious freebooter afterwards, in the year 1365, made an inroad into the province of Alsace, in Germany, which he laid waste with fire and sword; but he was met near the Rhine by a large body of incensed Germans, who drove him back into France with great loss. He was soon after assassinated by some of his lawless followers.†

Shortly after the arch-priest commenced his first acts of brigandage, there assembled another company of men-at-arms and foot soldiers of different nations, who overran and pillaged the whole country between the rivers Seine and Loire, so that no one dared to go from Paris to Vendome, Orleans, or Montargis, or remain in the open country; and the wretched inhabitants were forced to take refuge in Paris or Orleans. These troops, under a leader named Ruffin, marched with impunity towards Paris, Orleans, or Chartres, and sacked every place—town or fortress—that was not well guarded. They took, with little resistance, St. Arnould,

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 373; Raynaldus, *Annal. Eccles.* 1357, § 3.

† Raynaldus, *Annal. Eccles.*, 1365, § 5.

Galardon, Bonneval, Clois, Estampes, Chartres, Montlehery, Peviers, Larchant, Milly, Chateau-Laudon, Montargis, Yevre, and many other large towns. They rode through the country in bands of twenty, thirty, or forty, without meeting with the slightest opposition or injury. Besides these, there was a very large company of English and Navarrese pillagers in the province of Normandy, under Sir Robert Knolles, who, in the same manner, took possession of towns and castles. This famous robber, in the end, amassed a fortune of one hundred thousand crowns, and was enabled to keep a large body of soldiers in his pay.*

After the death of Etienne Marcel, in the year 1358, Charles the Bad, to avenge the death of his instrument and ally, declared war against the regent. Although the king of Navarre himself took no active part in the military operations of that year, various bands of pillagers, under his name and protection, overran and subdued many parts of the kingdom

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 373. "Sir Robert Knolles, Knight," says old Fuller, "was born of mean parentage in this county (Cheshire); yet did not the weight of his low extraction depress the wings of his martial mind; who, by his valour, wrought his own advancement. He was another of the thirty English who, for the honour of the nation, undertook to duel with as many Bretons, and came off with great reputation."

"He was afterwards commander in the French war, under King Edward III., where, in despite of their power, he drove the people before him like sheep, destroying towns, castles, and cities, in such manner and number, that many years after, the sharp points and gable ends of overthrown houses, cloven asunder with instruments of war, were commonly called *Knowles' mitres*."

"He died at his manor of Scone-Thorp, in Norfolk, in peace and honour, whereas martialists generally set in a cloud, being at least ninety years of age (for he must be allowed no less than thirty years old when, *anno* 1352, he was a general under King Edward III., and he survived until the 15th of August, 1407), being buried in Whitefriars, in London, to which he had been a great benefactor."—"Fuller's Worthies," vol. i. pp. 274. 275.

of France, especially the province of Picardy, the Isle of France, Champagne, and part of the Orleannois, and obtained the control of the river Seine, both above and below the city of Paris, as well as of the rivers Marne and Oise. They seized and fortified the strong castles of Creil, on the Oise; Le Herelle, near Amiens; and Mauconseil, near Noyon; and from these three fortresses such injuries were committed to the kingdom of France, "that they could not be repaired for an hundred years after." From the castle of Creil, a Norman knight, named Sir Foudrigais, granted safe conducts to all persons going from Paris to Noyon or Compiègne, or from Compiègne to Soissons or Laon, or the neighbouring marches; and these passports were worth to him, while he held Creil, fully one hundred thousand francs. From the castle of Le Herelle, Sir John de Péquigny, a knight of Picardy, and a constant adherent of Charles the Bad, kept in subjection the towns of Amiens, Arras, Montdidier, and Péronne, and the whole province of Picardy along the course of the river Somme.

The Irish and English captains, Derry, Franklin, and Hawkins, from the castle of Mauconseil, pillaged the surrounding country, and compelled the unwalled towns and abbeys to pay weekly a certain amount of florins, under the threat of being sacked and burnt. By such means the merchants and others were prevented from leaving Paris and the other towns on their necessary business; the lands were left waste and uncultivated; and, in consequence, such a scarcity prevailed in many parts of France, that "a keg of herrings sold for thirty crowns."

After the same manner, the province of Champagne was ravaged by Sir Peter Audley, an English knight, and Sir Eustace d'Aubrecicourt, a knight of Hainault, during the year 1359. The latter acquired such great wealth from ransoms, the sale of towns and castles, the redemption of

land and houses, and the granting of passports, that he was able to keep up ten or twelve fortresses, and maintain in his pay fully a thousand men.*

During the same year, Sir Robert Knolles, who had hitherto confined his ravages to the limits of Normandy, set on foot an expedition to the middle and south of France, and started with three thousand combatants from the borders of Brittany. He ascended the course of the river Loire and entered the province of Berry, where he burned and laid waste the whole country. When he approached Auvergne, he found the nobles of that province, with those of Limousin and the county of Forez, assembled with their retainers to the number of six thousand, and prepared to offer him battle; but Sir Robert Knolles, not deeming it prudent to meet that number, avoided an engagement, and retreated under the cover of night.†

During the invasion of France by Edward, towards the end of the year 1359, and until the termination of the war in May, 1360, when the peace of Bretigny was signed, the Free Companies were nearly all engaged in active hostilities

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 386, 387, 390, and pp. 399, 401; "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 278. This Sir Eustace d'Aubrecicourt is the same knight mentioned by Froissart, who "at this time very loyally loved a lady of high rank, and the lady loved him also. One may well name her, as she afterwards became his wife. She was Madame Isabel de Juliers, daughter of the Count de Juliers, by one of the daughters of the Count de Hainault. The queen of England was her aunt; she had in her youth married in England the Earl of Kent, but he died young. And she also was young, and was enamoured of Lord Eustace for his great valour and the feats of arms which he had performed, and of which she heard every day. At this time, when Sir Eustace was in Champagne, she sent him hackneys and many war-horses, with amourous letters and great significancies of love, by which the knight was more bold and courageous, and performed such great feats of arms, that every one spoke of him."—Liv. i. part ii. p. 401.

† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 412, 413.

on the side of the English, as most, if not all of them, were to be found among the enemies of the French. As large numbers of them were disbanded by the peace, Edward, at the request of king John, passed an ordinance requiring all his adherents and allies, who held any towns or castles anywhere within the domain of France, to vacate them within a month after notice, under the penalties of banishment and confiscation for treason.* Many of the English leaders, who were in possession of towns and fortresses before the peace, determined, on hearing the order, to surrender them, though unwillingly, and the greater part of them sold their possessions to those of the neighbourhood at a fair price; but some of the leaders would not abandon them, and, as their only occupation was war and pillage, they continued their practices as before, under the sanction of Charles the Bad. Among those who gave up their conquests was Sir Eustace d'Aubrecicourt, who held the town of Athegny, on the Aisne, which he sold at a high price; but he took nothing but promises, and he was afterwards but poorly paid.

Besides the English, there were many great captains and robbers of other nations, as Germans, Brabanters, Flemish, Hainaulters, Bretons, Gascons, and vile Frenchmen, who disobeyed the order of Edward, and resolved to reinstate themselves by making war on the kingdom of France. When the leaders who surrendered their fortresses were about to leave them, they discharged their followers. These men, who had learnt how to pillage, and who well knew that there would be little profit in returning to their own country, where, probably, they were afraid to go, on account of their villanous deeds, met together and elected new leaders, and in every instance selected the vilest among

* Rymer, vol. iii. par. i. p. 537.

them. They then first assembled in Champagne and Burgundy, and formed themselves into large troops and companies, who called themselves the *Tard-Venus* (Late Comers), for they had as yet pillaged but little the kingdom of France.

Their first feat was to take by surprise the strong castle of Joinville, in Champagne, and with it they acquired a very large booty, which had been carried there from the surrounding country for safe keeping, on account of the supposed strength of the place. The companies divided this booty among them, which was estimated at one hundred thousand francs, and then overran and laid waste the whole province of Champagne, the bishopric of Verdun, Toul, and Langres. When they had completely sacked the country they abandoned it: but, before doing so, they sold the castle of Joinville to the people of the vicinity for twenty thousand francs. They then entered the province of Burgundy, where they committed the most atrocious deeds, as they had among them some infamous knights and squires of the country, who conducted them, and pointed out the subjects for plunder and vengeance. The companies remained a long while around Besançon, Dijon, and Beaune, plundered every spot where any booty was to be found, and took the town of Givri, where they continued for some time, and around Vergy, on account of the abundance of the country. Their numbers increased continually: for they who were forced to abandon their fortresses, and whom their leaders had dismissed, united themselves to the companies already formed, so that by Lent of the year 1361 they amounted to fully fifteen thousand combatants.*

When the companies found that their numbers had so greatly increased, they elected many captains to command them, whom they implicitly obeyed. The most distinguished

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 440, 448, 453.

leader among them was a Gascon knight, named Sir Seguin de Batefol, who had under him fully two thousand fighting men. Besides, there were Talebart Talebardon, Guiot du Pin, Espiote, Little Merchin, Batillier, François Hannequin, the Boure Camus, the Boure de l'Espare, Nandon de Bagerant, the Boure de Bretuel, Lamit, Hagre l'Escot, Albrest Ourri the German, Borduelle, Bernard de la Salle, Robert Briquet, Carsuelle, Aymemon d'Ortinge, Garsiot du Chastel, Guiounet du Paux, Hortings de la Salle, and many others.

The great strength of these companies at length aroused the fears of the French monarch, for it was represented to him by his council that these troops might so increase, that they would cause more evils to the kingdom than the English had done in their wars: the king, therefore, ordered Lord James de Bourbon, who was then in the town of Montpellier, to collect a sufficient number of men-at-arms to enable him successfully to attack them. The Lord James, who was a popular leader, soon collected a large body of knights and squires from Auvergne, Limousin, Provence, Savoye, and Dauphiné, besides a considerable number sent to him by the young Duke of Burgundy from that province.

When the companies, then assembled near Chalons on the Saone, and about Tournus, found out that the French were collecting forces to attack them, the leaders met together in council to determine what course they should pursue. Their forces then amounted to sixteen thousand men. It was proposed to meet the French army and offer them battle; and it was added, "if it shall so happen that fortune will declare for us, we shall all be rich and re-established for a long time, not only in the prisoners which we shall take, but we shall strike such terror wherever we go, that no one will dare to attack us; and, if we fail, our wages will be paid." The proposition was adopted. The companies

then decamped, with the intention of passing through the province of Forez to the river Loire. On their way, they made an attack on the fortified town of Charlieu, near Macon, which proved unsuccessful. After a ruinous foray which they then made on the lands of the Lord de Beaujeu, they entered the archbishopric of Lyons, and took the castle of Brignais, on the Rhone, about three leagues below the city of Lyons. Here they pitched their camps and awaited the approach of the French.*

The leaders of the Free Companies selected their position on this occasion with much judgment. They took advantage of a hill, and placed the right of their army, composed of their best-appointed troops, below the summit, in a place where they could neither be seen nor approached. By this disposition they deceived the scouts of Lord James de Bourbon, sent to reconnoitre their position: for the scouts reported, on their return, that the companies did not number more than five or six thousand men; and, besides, that they were badly armed. Upon this report, Lord James said to Sir Regnault de Cervole, who was standing near him:—

"Arch-priest, you told me that the companies had fifteen thousand combatants, and you now hear entirely the reverse."

"Sire," replied the arch-priest, "I still think they have no less than I have said; but, if they have less, it will be the better for us. Now you must decide what you will do."

"We will fight them," quickly answered Lord James, "in the name of God and St. George."

Lord James then made his dispositions for an immediate engagement, and created a number of new knights. The arch-priest was appointed to command the first division of the French army, and ordered to commence the attack, which he readily undertook, as he was a bold and expert

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 453, 455.

knight, and he had under his command upwards of fifteen hundred well-armed men.

The leaders of the Free Companies saw very plainly the order and disposition of the French, though their own could not be seen, nor could their position be approached without much difficulty and peril: for they occupied an elevated place, whither they had carried more than a thousand cart-loads of stones, which they employed with good effect in the fight. The French men-at-arms, in advancing to the attack, could not approach the enemy but by an oblique movement up the side of the hill to the position where they were drawn up to receive them; and, in attempting to do this, the brigands from above began throwing down stones upon them, and with such force, that many helmets were beaten in, and the men-at-arms so wounded and put in disorder, that not one of them could advance, however well protected he might be.

Lord James de Bourbon, with the second division, came to the support of the first; but he had no better fortune than the arch-priest: for, after being kept in check for some time by the worst disciplined and ill-armed portion of the Free Companies, and getting a number of his men wounded by the stones thrown down upon them from above, he was attacked by the fresh and well-armed division, which had been kept in reserve, and which now came around the hill in close order, with their lances drawn back to six feet, shouting their war cry:—"St. George!" Many of the French were overthrown at the first onset. A fierce struggle and great confusion ensued; but the freebooters fought with such skill and bravery, that the French were forced to retreat. The arch-priest maintained his former reputation for valour and endurance, until he was overpowered by force of arms, severely wounded, and taken prisoner, with many knights and squires of his troop. Lord James de Bourbon,

the commander-in-chief, and Sir Pierre de Bourbon, his son, were mortally wounded. They were carried to the city of Lyons, where Lord James died of his wounds three days after the battle. The young Count de Forez was slain on the field; and his uncle, Sir Regnault de Forez, the Count d'Uzès, Sir Robert de Beaujeu, Sir Louis de Chalons, the Green Knight, and more than a hundred other knights, were taken prisoners. This disastrous battle of Brignais was fought on the Friday after Easter, in the year 1361.*

By the successful result of the battle of Brignais, the Free Companies realized all their expectations. They not only obtained high prices for the ransom of their prisoners, but they were suffered to pillage the country without resistance. Immediately after the battle, they entered and dispersed themselves throughout the province of Forez, plundering and laying waste everything but the fortified places. As no country was ever sufficiently rich to supply the wants, for any long period, of so large a band of robbers, a part of them, under Sir Seguin de Batefol, comprising about three thousand men, repaired and fortified the town of Anse, near Lyons, from which they could easily overrun the country on the Saône, the county of Macon, the archbishopric of Lyons, the lands of Lord de Beaujeu, and to the confines of the county of Nevers. But by far the greater portion of them, under Naudon de Bagerent, Espiote, Carsuelle, Robert Briquet, and other leaders, marched towards Avignon, declaring that they would visit the pope and cardinals, and get money out of them, or they should be roughly treated. On their way they sacked all the undefended places and the smaller fortresses, and took by surprise the important town of Pont l'Esprit, at the confluence of the Ardèche and the

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 456, 457. Buchon fixes the date of the battle by the inscription on the tomb of Lord James de Bourbon, supported by the *Chroniques de France*, the 6th of April, 1362.

Rhône, whither the treasure of the adjoining county had been carried, trusting to the strength of the place. Here the Companies committed all kinds of excesses. They slew many brave men, violated many women, and acquired a vast amount of booty, and provisions of all sorts sufficient to support them for an entire year. Here they elected a leader, who was to be the chief captain over them, and whom they blasphemously called the *Friend of God, and Enemy of all the World.* "Such and similar names, in their wickedness, they gave to their leaders."*

There were still in other parts of France a great number of English, Gascon, and German robbers, *who wished*, as they said, *to live*, and who retained their fortresses, although the commissioners appointed by the king of England had ordered them to be vacated. Only a part of the leaders obeyed the mandate; and their refusal, coupled with the manifest indifference of Edward III. about the matter, gave great displeasure to the king of France. When most of these pillagers, who were banded together in different parts of the kingdom, heard that their comrades had overthrown Lord James de Bourbon, with more than two thousand knights and squires, taken a number of rich prisoners, seized and sacked the town of Pont l'Esprit, and gained with it an inestimable treasure, and that they hoped to conquer Avignon and the whole county of Provence, and have the pope and cardinals at their mercy, they left their fortresses to join their associates in the south, in the hope of committing greater excesses and acquiring more booty.†

The numbers and insolence of the Free Companies, resulting from their late accessions, and their success at the battle of Brignais, greatly alarmed the pope and the sacred

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 458; "Contin. Nangi.," tom. ii. p. 316.
† Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 458, 459.

college. It was then necessary to apply some speedy and potent remedy to the evils caused by the ravages of these lawless freebooters, who laid waste the country wherever they went; pillaged, without hesitation, whatever they could lay hands on; violated, without remorse, women old and young; slew, without mercy, men, women, and children; and, in their sight, he was the most valiant and best esteemed among them who could perform the vilest deeds. The pope and cardinals therefore determined to invoke the aid of Christendom against the Free Companies. They accordingly proclaimed a crusade to destroy these "cursed people;" called upon the faithful everywhere to come to the aid of the head of the church; and offered a free pardon, and full absolution from all their sins, to those who would enlist under the banner of the cross. The Bishop of Arras, afterwards Cardinal and Bishop of Ostia, was appointed the leader of the crusade.*

The bishop fixed his head-quarters at Carpentras, near Avignon, where he willingly received all those who desired to redeem their souls. But the times of Gregory VII. and Urban II. had long since passed. The spell was broken; and obedient or enthusiastic Europe would no longer blindly follow the mandates of the pope, or flock at his summons to the holy standard. Many knights and squires, indeed, assembled under the banners of the Bishop of Arras, in expectation of obtaining something more substantial than the spiritual rewards offered by the pope; but, as the leader of the army was only able to distribute pardons in lieu of pay, his hasty levies soon dropped off; when some of them went into Lombardy, many returned home, while the rest joined themselves to the Free Companies, and increased their numbers from day to day.

* Raynaldus, *Annal. Eccles.*, 1361, § 5.

The pope, deriving no relief from his spiritual arm, applied to the Marquis of Montferrat—who was then engaged in a war with the Viscontis, lords of Milan—to give employment to these Companies, and lead them out of his territories into Lombardy. The marquis came at once to Avignon, at the solicitation of the pope, and soon concluded an engagement with the leaders of the Companies for the sum of sixty thousand florins, to be divided amongst them, with the promise of high wages, besides obtaining for them a full absolution for all their sins. After receiving the sum of money promised, the Free Companies restored the town of Pont l'Esprit, evacuated the territories of the pope, and accompanied the Marquis of Montferrat into Lombardy. France was thus relieved for a time from a large body of these dreaded robbers; but the relief was only partial and temporary: for, after peace was made between the Marquis of Montferrat and the Viscontis, great numbers of them returned and spread themselves again over the kingdom. The detachment, under Sir Seguin de Batefol, did not accompany their comrades into Italy, but kept up their marauding expeditions from their fortified stronghold at Anse, near Lyons; and their leader, after years of successful pillage, at length safely returned, with immense treasures, into Gascony, and died by poison administered at the table of Charles the Bad, king of Navarre.*

No serious effort appears to have been made during the reign of John, king of France, to suppress the predatory incursions of the Free Companies; although he assigns, as one of his reasons for taking up the cross to go to the Holy Land, at the solicitation of the king of Cyprus, his desire "to carry out of the kingdom the Companies who were pillaging

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 459, 460; and *Déposition de Jacques de Rue*, in *Recueil des Pièces sur Charles II., Roy de Navarre*, by Secousse, p. 381.

and destroying it without reason, and to save their souls." But Charles V., as soon as he came to the throne, at once used every means in his power to free his kingdom from this scourge. He immediately sent Bertrand du Guesclin and the Maréchal de Boucicault into Normandy, and the Duke of Burgundy, with other leaders, on the Loire and elsewhere, against them, who succeeded in dislodging them from some of their strongholds, and restoring rest and security to many parts of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XVI.

Narrative of the Bascot de Mauléon, a leader of the Free Companies, to Froissart. Efforts of the king of France to expel the Free Companies from the kingdom.

FROISSART, with that wonderful prescience of everything that was likely to arrest the attention of posterity, and who lost no occasion of recording whatever was memorable in his own times, has recorded an interview with one of the leaders of these famous Companies, whom he met some years after the events above mentioned at an inn of the town of Orthès, when on a visit to the court of the celebrated Gaston Phœbus, Count de Foix.* This freebooter was a squire of Gascony, named the Bascot de Mauléon, who is described as a bold and expert man-at-arms; and, from his appearance at that time, as about sixty years of age. He entered the hall in much state: for he had as many sumpter-horses as a great baron, and he and his people were served on silver plate. Froissart, finding out who he was, at once introduced himself; and, while seated before the fire at the inn, waiting for midnight—the hour when the Count de Foix usually supped

* Alexander Dumas has made use of this interview between Froissart and De Mauléon as the groundwork for one of his most interesting romances, which he entitles *The Knight de Mauléon.*

—the Bourg de Campane, a kinsman of De Mauléon, asked him to relate his various feats of arms, and some of the many stirring incidents of his life, with his gains as well as his losses.

"De Mauléon then asked me," continues Froissart, "Sir John, have you not in your history what I will tell you?"

"I know not," I replied, "yes or no; tell your tale: for I would willingly hear of arms, and I do not remember everything—besides, I cannot have been informed of everything."

The Gascon then commenced his narrative; and, after relating to Froissart how the Duchess of Normandy and other ladies, besieged in the market-place of Meaux, were relieved by the timely arrival of the Count de Foix and the Captal de Buch from the attacks of the *Jacquerie*—after giving some account of his own exploits in the bishoprics of Beauvais and Amiens, and of the siege of Rheims by Edward III.—he said:—

"I well believe you have all these things: how the king of England came before Chartres, and how peace was made between the two kings."

"It is true," I replied; "I have them all, and how the treaties were framed."

The Bascot de Mauléon then continued his narrative, and said:—

"When peace was made between the two kings, all the men-at-arms, and the members of the Free Companies, were required by the treaty to surrender, and abandon the fortresses and castles which they held. Then all sorts of poor soldiers who had taken up arms assembled together, and many captains counselled with each other where they should go, saying, 'that if the kings had made peace, they must live also.' They all met in Burgundy, where there were captains of all nations—English, Gascons, Spaniards, Germans, Scotch—and men of all countries;

and I was there as one of the captains. Our numbers, with those who joined us in Burgundy and above the river Loire, amounted altogether to more than twelve thousand. And I assure you, that in that assembly there were from three to four thousand men-at-arms of the proper sort: as skilful and wise in war as any one could be to plan a battle, take any advantage, or to scale and attack towns and castles. For we showed that clearly at the battle of Brignais, where we overthrew the Constable of France, the Count de Forez, and fully two thousand lances of knights and squires. This battle brought great profit to the Companies: for at that time they were poor, and by it they became rich in good prisoners, and the towns and fortresses which they took in the archbishopric of Lyons and on the river Rhône.

"Their work was complete when they took Pont Saint Esprit, for they could then make war on the pope and cardinals, and do them much injury; nor could the churchmen get rid of them until the Companies had laid waste everything. But, at length, the means were found. The pope sent into Lombardy for the Marquis of Montferrat, who was then making war against the Lord of Milan. When the marquis came to Avignon, the pope and cardinals treated with him, and he had a conference with the English, Gascon, and German captains. For the sum of sixty thousand francs, which the pope and cardinals paid to many captains of these troops—such as Sir Jean Haccoude,* a very valiant

* Sir John Hawkwood. "The name of this captain," says M. de Sismondi, "was so disfigured by the Italian historians, that it would have been scarcely recognised, if a writer of his time had not thought of translating it into Italian, by calling him *Falcone in bosco.*"—Buchon's Note to Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 459. Tindal, in his note to "Rapin's History of England," vol. i. p. 438, says:—"Hawkwood was a tanner's son, of Essex; and, being bound apprentice to a tailor in London, quitted his trade and went a soldier into France, where he was knighted for his valour; and, going into Italy (as was said), was so much in favour with

English knight, Sir Robert Briquet, Carsuele, Naudon de Bageran, the Bourg de Bretueil, the Bourg Camus, the Bourg de l'Espare, Batillier, and many others—they went into Lombardy, gave up Pont Saint Esprit, and carried with them six parts of all the Companies. But Sir Seguin de Batefol, Sir John Jouel, Sir Jacquéme Planchin, Lamit, Sir John Aymery, the Bourg de Pierregort, Espiote, Louis Rambaut, Lymosin, James Tyriel, I, and many others, remained behind. We held Anse, St. Clement, La Berelle, La Terrasse, Brignais, Mont St. Denis, L'Hospital de Rochefort, and more than sixty fortified places, in the counties of Macon and Forez, in Bellay, in Lower Burgundy, and on the river Loire. We laid the whole country under contri-

the Duke of Milan, that he gave him his natural daughter in marriage. After the duke's death he served the commonwealth of Florence, and performed such great actions for them, that, dying in their service, they erected a monument for him in the cathedral of that city. The translator, serving as chaplain to Sir Charles Wager in the late expedition into Italy, on Don Carlos's account, and, being in Florence, took particular notice of this monument. He is painted on the wall of the church, on horseback, in armour—the whole of a green colour, with these two lines under his horse's feet :—

"Johannes Acutus, Eques Britannicus, Dux suæ ætatis
Cautissimus, et rei militaris peritissimus, habitus est."

Old Fuller, after alluding to his birth and training in England, and to his military reputation acquired in France and Italy, as above mentioned, adds :—"Great the gratitude of the state of Florence to this their General Hawkwood, who, in testimony of his surpassing valour and singular faithful service to their state, adorned with the statue of a man-at-arms a sumptuous monument, wherein his ashes remain honoured at this present day. Well it is that monument doth remain; seeing his cenotaph, or honorary tomb, which sometimes stood in the parish church of Sible-Heningham (arched over, and, in allusion to his name, *berebussed* with hawks flying into a wood), is now quite flown away and abolished. He married Domina, daughter of Barnaby, the brother of Galeasius, Lord of Milan. He died, very aged, *anno* 1394."—"Fuller's Worthies," vol. i. pp. 512, 513.

bution; and they could not get rid of us, neither by paying well nor otherwise. We took by night Charité on the Loire, and we held it fully a year and a half.

"The country was all ours above the Loire, as far as Puy, in Auvergne: for Sir Seguin de Batefol left Anse and took La Brionde in Auvergne, where, and in the neighbourhood, he made a profit of one hundred thousand francs; and also below the Loire as far as Orleans, and along the course of the Allier. The arch-priest, who was the commander of Nevers, and who was then a loyal Frenchman, could do nothing to remedy these evils, except that he was acquainted with the Companies, and, at his entreaty, they would do almost anything for him. He was able, however, to perform an important service in Nivernois, by fortifying the city of Nevers, or it would have been taken and sacked many times: for we held in the province fully twenty-seven towns and castles, and there was neither knight, squire, nor rich man, who dared to leave his house, unless he had first made terms with us. We carried on this war with the knowledge and for the benefit of the king of Navarre.

"Then came on the battle of Cocherel, where the Captal de Buch commanded for the king of Navarre, and many knights and squires went to aid him to carry on the war more effectually. On our side, Sir Planchin and Sir John Jouel did him good service with two hundred lances. I held at that time a castle near Charité, on the road towards the Bourbonnois, called the Bié d'Allier, with forty lances under me; and I made large profits from the county, within the limits of Moulins, and about Saint-Poursain and Saint-Père le Moustier. But, when the news came to me that the captal, my master, was in the Cotentin, and was assembling troops from all quarters, on account of the great desire I had to see him, I left my fort with twelve lances, and joined the company of Sir John Jouel and Sir Jacquéme Planchin;

and we all reached the captal without loss, or any encounter that occasioned loss. I believe, however, that you have in your history that whole affair, just as it passed."

"That is true," I replied. "There the captal was taken, and Sir John Jouel and Sir Jacquéme Planchin were slain."

"It is just so," said the Bascot de Mauléon; "and there I was taken prisoner likewise; but I was fortunate, as it was by my own cousin, and a cousin to my cousin here present, the Bourg de Campane. His name was Bernard de Tarride. He was afterwards killed in Portugal, at the battle of Aljubarota. Bernard, who was under the command of Sir Aymemon de Pommiers, fixed my ransom immediately, and gave me a passport to return to my fortress at Bié d'Allier. As soon as I arrived there, I called one of my varlets, and counted out to him one thousand francs, which he carried to Paris, and brought me back receipts in full for the payment.

"During the same season Sir John Aymery, an English knight, and one of our greatest captains, was riding along the banks of the river Loire, on his way to Charité, when he was attacked by the Lords de Rougemont and De Vodenay, with the soldiers of the arch-priest, who were lying in wait for him. They proved too strong for him; so that Sir Aymery was overthrown and taken prisoner. He was not long afterwards ransomed at thirty thousand francs, which he paid down; but he was so irritated by his capture and loss, that he swore he would never return to his fortress until he had regained what he had paid. So he collected a large number of followers, came to Charité on the Loire, and begged the Captains Lamit, Carsuelle, the Bourg de Pierregort, and me—for we had all gone there just for amusement —to join him on a military expedition. We all asked him where he was going. 'By my faith,' he replied, 'we will pass the river Loire at Port St. Thibault, and take and sack the town of Sancerre. I have vowed and sworn never to

return to my fortress until I have seen the sons of Sancerre. If we can take the garrison of Sancerre, with John, Louis, and Robert, the sons of the count, we shall be reinstated, and all of us will be lords of the country. We can easily accomplish our purpose, as they give themselves no concern about us, and we can gain nothing by remaining here.' 'That is true,' we replied. We then entered into an agreement with him, and immediately made preparations for the expedition.

"It now happened," continued De Mauléon, "that our designs were found out in the town of Sancerre. The governor of the town was a valiant squire, born in the lower marches of Burgundy, named Guichart Albregon, who ably acquitted himself in guarding the town, the castle, and the lands of Sancerre, and in taking care of his sons: for all three were then knights. This Guichart had a brother, a monk of the abbey of St. Thibault, which lies near Sancerre, whom he sent to Charité on the Loire, to carry the amount of a composition which some of the towns owed the Companies. No one took special notice of him; but the monk found out by some means our entire agreement and design; the names of the captains of all the fortresses around Charité, with the strength of their garrisons; and also at what hour, where, and how they were to pass the river at Port St. Thibault. With this information he returned, and imparted the whole scheme to his brother. The sons of Sancerre prepared for the attack as soon as they could, and informed the knights and squires of Berry and Bourbonnois, and the captains of all the garrisons in the neighbourhood, of the affair, who soon assembled, to the number of four hundred good lances. A strong detachment of two hundred lances was placed in ambush, in a wood just outside of the town of Sancerre.

"At sunset we left Charité, and rode in good order, at a brisk gait, until we reached Pouilli, where, at the port below,

we had collected a large number of boats to convey us and our horses over the river Loire, which we crossed about midnight. We all got our horses over safely. It was now day, and we left behind us a hundred lances to guard the horses and boats. With the rest we took the road at a brisk step, and passed a body of men lying in ambush, who did not discover themselves to us. When we had passed them about a quarter of a league, they sallied out, fell upon our men at the river, and entirely routed them. All were either slain or taken prisoners, the horses caught, and the boats seized; and, mounting our horses, they put spurs to them, and reached the town of Sancerre as soon as we. On every side they cried out, "Notre Dame, Sancerre!" for the count was there with his people, and Sir Louis and Sir Robert had laid the ambush for us. We were entirely surrounded, and knew not what to think. There was a great thrusting of lances: for those on our horses, as soon as they came up, dismounted and attacked us fiercely in the rear. We suffered most on account of the disadvantageous position we were in: for we had entered a road enclosed on both sides by high hedges and vines, behind which a number of the country people, with their servants, threw stones and flints in such a manner that they wounded us, and put everything into disorder. We could not retreat, and we had great difficulty in approaching the town, which was built on a mountain. Here we were thrown into great confusion; and our chief captain, Sir John Aymery, was severely wounded, and taken by Guichart Albregon, who put himself to much trouble to save the life of his prisoner. He carried him to a house in the town, laid him on a bed, and said to the owner of the house:—'Keep this prisoner for me, and dress his wounds immediately: for he is very rich, and, if he lives, he may pay me twenty thousand francs.' After these words Albregon left his prisoner and returned to

the fight, where he showed himself a very able man-at-arms among the rest.

"There were a number of distinguished knights in the company of the sons of Sancerre, who had come for the love of arms, and to aid in defending the country; and among them were Sir Guichart Daulphin, the Lords de Talus, de Mournay, de Coussant, de Pierre, de la Palice, de Neuce, de la Fréte, Sir Girart and Sir Guillaume de Bourbon, Sir Louis de la Croise, and many others. And I tell you, that was a bloody battle and a ferocious rencounter. We kept together and defended ourselves as long as we could, so that many were slain and wounded on both sides; and they showed that they were more willing to take us alive than dead. But, at length, we were all taken prisoners—Carsuelle, Lamit, Naudon, the Bourg de Pierregort, Espiote, the Bourg de l'Espare, Augerot de Lamougis, Philippe de Roe, Pierre de Courton, l'Esperat de Pamiers, the Bourg d'Armesen, and all the captains who were in the neighbourhood. We were taken to the castle of Sancerre amid great rejoicings: for the Companies, throughout the whole kingdom of France, never suffered so great a loss as they did on that occasion. Guichart Albregon, notwithstanding his care, lost his prisoner: for the person who had him in charge, by his great wickedness and negligence, suffered him to bleed to death. So ended Sir John Aymery.

"By this defeat and capture, which took place below Sancerre, the town of Charité on the Loire, and all the fortresses of the neighbourhood, were restored to the French, on the condition that we should all be discharged from imprisonment, and be permitted to leave the kingdom of France and go wherever else we pleased. It happened well for us at this juncture: for just then Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, the Lord de Beaujeu, Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, and the Count de la Marche, were preparing for an expedition into

Spain, to aid King Henry against his brother Don Pedro. But before that I was in Brittany, at the battle of Auray, where I put myself under Sir Hugh Calverly; and there I reinstated myself: for the day was ours, and I took some good prisoners, who were worth to me two thousand francs. I then went with twelve lances into Spain, under Sir Hugh Calverly, and we put Don Pedro out of the kingdom. Afterwards, when Don Pedro made an alliance with the Prince of Wales, who wished to replace him on the throne of Castille, I was then in the company of Sir Hugh Calverly, as before. After that, I returned immediately into Aquitaine with him.

"Then was the war renewed between the king of France and the Prince of Wales; so we had much to do: for they carried on a very fierce warfare against us, by which a great number of English and Gascon captains were slain: and yet, thank God, I am still alive. Among the first, Sir Robert Briquet died in the Orleannois, between the country of Blois and the lands of the Duke of Orleans, at a place called Olivet, where he was overthrown with his whole company by a squire of Hainault, a very valiant man-at-arms, and a good captain, named Alard Van Oulten, who bore the arms of a Brabençon, for he was of that family. This Alard was at that time governor of Blois, and guardian of the whole country for the Lords Louis, Jean, and Guy. He chanced to meet Sir Robert Briquet and Sir Robert Thein at Olivet; and he attacked them so gallantly that he overthrew them; and the leaders were slain on the spot, with all their followers, for not a single man was ransomed.

"It happened afterwards, at the battle of Merck, in Xaintonge, that Carsuelle was slain by Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, who overthrew him, and fully seven hundred English, who were killed at the same time. At this battle, and at St. Sevère, Richard Gilles and Richard Holmes, both English captains, were also slain. I know but few of them,

besides myself, who have not suffered violent deaths. So I have kept on the frontiers and made war for the king of England, as my lands lie in the Bordelois. Sometimes I have been overthrown, so that I had not a horse to ride; at other times I was rich enough, just as good luck happened. At one time, Raymonnet de l'Espée and I were companions in arms; and we held in Toulousain, on the frontiers of Bigorre, the castles of Mauvoisin, Trigalet, and Neutilleux, which brought us great profits; but the Duke of Anjou came with a large force and took them away from us. Raymonnet de l'Espée was at the same time taken prisoner; and soon after he turned over to the French; but I continued a loyal Englishman, and I will so remain as long as I live.

"When I had lost the castle of Trigalet, I went to the castle Tuillier, after the Duke of Anjou had returned into France. I then resolved to undertake some exploit which would bring me profit, or die in the attempt. I therefore sent to make a reconnaisance of the town and castle of Thurit, in the Albigeois; which castle has since been worth to me, by pillage, by composition and good luck that I have met with there, one hundred thousand francs. I will now tell you how I took it.

"Outside of the castle and the town there is a very fine fountain, where every morning the women from the town are accustomed to go with buckets and other vessels, and, after filling them, to carry them back on their heads. I took part myself in this expedition, and selected fifty followers from the garrison of castle Tuillier. We rode a whole day through the woods and heaths; and the following night, about midnight, I placed an ambush near enough to the town; and, with only six followers, dressed like women, with buckets in our hands, we came to a meadow near the town, where we concealed ourselves in a cock of hay: for it was

then about St. John's day, in summer, during the season of mowing and haymaking. As soon as the hour came when the gate was opened, and the women began to come to the fountain, we filled our buckets, and went towards the town, with our faces enveloped in kerchiefs. No one would ever have recognised us. The women whom we met exclaimed, 'Ha! St. Mary, how early you have risen!' We answered them in their own language, with disguised voices, 'It is true;' and went on, all six of us, to the gate. When we arrived there, we found no other guard than a cobbler, who was putting in order his lasts and rivets. One of us sounded a horn to bring up our companions in ambush. The cobbler gave himself no concern about us; but, when he heard the horn, he asked:—

"'Women, Haro! who blew that horn?'"

"'It was a priest,' answered one of our number, 'who is going out into the fields. I know not if he is the curate or chaplain of the town.'

"'That is true,' replied the cobbler; 'it is Master Pierre François, our priest, who goes early every morning into the fields to hunt hares.'

"Soon after, our companions having come up, we entered the town, and found no one who put hand to his sword in its defence.

"Thus I took the town and castle of Thurit, which has yielded me more profit and annual revenue than the castle is worth, with its appendages, sold at the highest price. But I know not at present what I ought to do about it: for I am in treaty with the Count d'Armagnac and the Dauphin d'Auvergne, who have express authority from the king of France to purchase towns and fortresses from the Companies in Auvergne, Rouergue, Quercy, Limousin, Périgord, the Albigeois, and Agen, and from all those who have made war under the protection of England. Many have already gone

and given up their fortresses. Now I do not know whether I shall surrender mine or not."

"Cousin," replied the Bourg de Campane, "you speak truly. Concerning the fortress of Carlat, which I hold in Auvergne, I have just learnt some news at Orthès, in the palace of the Count de Foix: for Sir Louis de Sancerre, Maréchal of France, is to be here soon. He is now lying quiet at Tarbes, as I have heard from those who have seen him there."

At these words, Froissart adds, "they asked for wine, which was brought, and we all drank." Then said the Bascot de Mauléon :—

"Sir John, what say you? Are you well informed of my life? I have had many more adventures which I have not told you of, and about which I cannot, nor will I, speak before all."

"By my faith!" said I, "sir, yes."*

This rambling narrative of the Bascot de Mauléon has brought down some of the incidents relating to the Free Companies much later than the year 1365—to which period it will be necessary to return—when Charles V., with the effectual aid of Bertrand du Guesclin, freed the kingdom, for a season, from their dreadful ravages. At this time, after the settlement of the affairs of Brittany, and the conclusion of peace with Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, the Free Companies commenced afresh their predatory incursions, now wholly confined to the kingdom of France, which they insolently called *their chamber*. They did not attempt to enter Aquitaine, the territory of the Black Prince: for the greater part of their leaders were English and Gascons, with a few Bretons, who were attached to the king of England and the Prince of Wales.

* Froissart, liv. iii. pp. 406, 411.

The excesses committed by these troops became such an intolerable evil, that it was resolved by the French authorities either to give them battle or entice them, by great bribes, out of the kingdom. Just then Louis the Great, king of Hungary, being engaged in a war with the Turks, wrote to Pope Urban V. at Avignon, and also to the king of France and the Black Prince, to aid him in enlisting these Companies into his service. He offered the captains a large sum of money, and a free passage; but not one would consent, on account of the distance, and the apprehended dangers of the war. The overtures of Bertrand du Guesclin, made soon after, to lead them into Castille against Peter the Cruel, met with much greater success.*

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. pp. 502, 504.

CHAPTER XVII.

Transition to the affairs of Spain. Alfonso XI. Leonora de Guzman. Alburquerque. Peter the Cruel. Blanche de Bourbon. Maria de Padilla. Henry of Trastamara.

THE Spanish peninsula was divided, in the fourteenth century, into the five kingdoms of Castille, Aragon, Portugal, Navarre, and Granada. To the government of Castille Alfonso XI., after a long minority, succeeded in the year 1324, and found the kingdom plunged in all the disorders occasioned by the jealous rivalries and ill-regulated ambition of the nobles. By the firmness and wisdom of his administration, he at length reduced the great crown-vassals to obedience, and succeeded in turning the arms which they had used against each other upon the Moorish kingdom of Granada, which he brought to the verge of destruction by the great victory on the banks of the Rio Salado, near Tarifa, where, it has been, perhaps extravagantly, computed, two hundred thousand Africans perished. Gibraltar was on the point of being yielded up to him, as one of the fruits of the victory, when he was struck down, in the prime of life, on the 27th of March, in the year 1350, by the dreadful plague which devastated all Europe.

Alfonso was able to suppress the disorders of his own times; but, by his unhappy amours, he bequeathed to his

posterity and country greater evils than those which it had been the object of his life to remedy. By his marriage with Donna Maria of Portugal, he had one son, Peter, who succeeded him when little over fifteen years of age; but, by his mistress, the celebrated Donna Leonora de Guzman, he had ten children. After the birth of her son, Donna Maria, the wife, was entirely neglected; while the mistress, Donna Leonora, was the constant companion of Alfonso, over whom she exercised almost absolute control. While Peter, the heir, was forced to remain at home, in Seville, a daily witness of the distress and humiliation of his mother, his bastard brothers, Henry and Fadrique, were permitted to accompany their father on his various expeditions, clothed in armour, and attended by all the military pageantry of that warlike age. Henry, in the lifetime of Alfonso, was provided with a magnificent establishment of his own, with the title of Conde (count) of Trastamara, when that title was a rare distinction in Castille; and his twin brother, Fadrique, when scarcely ten years of age, had been nominated by his father grand-master of Sant Jago—one of the three great military orders; and his election was forced on the knights, so as to secure him one of the highest positions in the kingdom. The degradation of his mother, and the distinctions continually made to his prejudice in favour of his bastard brothers, probably gave rise, in the youthful breast of Peter, to those intense feelings of jealousy and hatred towards his father's mistress and her offspring, which the subsequent incidents of his life served so well to develop and extend to all who came within their influence, and gave him the dreadful epithet of *cruel*, which posterity has affixed to his name.

Peter, when he came to the throne, being yet a mere boy under sixteen, passionately devoted himself to the pleasures of the chase, and left the government of the kingdom to the

ministers of his father, among whom were the two greatest nobles of the kingdom, Don Juan Alonso de Alburquerque, grand chancellor and treasurer, and Don Juan Nuñez de Lara, Lord of Biscay, grand standard-bearer. These nobles united their influence for a time, until they had crushed the party attached to the fallen favourite. This object was easily accomplished: for Leonora de Guzman, immediately after the death of Alfonso, shut herself up in the castle of Medina Sidonia; but soon surrendered, upon the promise of a safe conduct to Seville. From Seville she was removed to the castle of Carmona, where she was closely confined, until, upon the convocation of the Cortes at Valladolid, she was removed, by the order of Alburquerque, to the castle of Talavera, which belonged to Queen Maria, and was held by Gutier Fernandez, one of her liege-men. Here the unfortunate Leonora was not permitted to languish in prison: for her rival, who was weak and unsteady, and an erring woman like herself, had not the generosity to forgive. In a few days a secretary of the queen brought the governor Leonora's death-warrant, and she was executed privately, within the walls of the castle. Her eldest son, Henry, fearing the same fate, had made his escape out of the hands of his enemies before the death of his mother.

Alburquerque, being now relieved of all fears from Leonora de Guzman, and freed by the sudden death of Juan Nuñez de Lara from all opposition on the part of his great rival—with the young king wholly devoted to dogs and falcons, and Donna Maria, the queen-mother, under his control—might well regard the government of the kingdom secure in his hands. He did not, however, deem the tenure absolutely sure, while there remained any of the family of Lara to oppose his will. He accordingly, without the form of law, or any accusation of crime, procured the death of Garcilasso de la Vega, lieutenant-general of Castille, and

one of the chief adherents of the late Juan Nuñez. Having overcome all opposition to his government, Alburquerque thought he could also render the possession of it permanent; but, after several years of undisputed sway, he began to discern some flashes of temper, and certain exhibitions of will, on the part of his young master, which alarmed his fears; and, not doubting that he could control the actions of Peter, and divert him from the inclination to govern alone, by substituting more potent attractions in their stead than the pleasures of the chase, the minister drew his attention towards Donna Maria de Padilla, a young girl, descended from a noble family, and brought up in his own house. Alburquerque contrived the first interview between them; and he is said to have been aided in the base transaction by her brother, Don Diego de Padilla, and her uncle, Don Juan Fernandez de Hinestrosa. Maria is described as small of stature, pretty, lively, and exhibiting in her motions and manners that voluptuous grace peculiar to the women of the south of Europe. She was distinguished for her sprightly wit, her good sense and kindly temper, by which she was often enabled to moderate the terrible severity of her lover's judgments.*

* Maria's influence over the mind of Peter is attributed by the romance writers of the times neither to her good sense nor good temper, but to spells and enchantments. Cuvelier, v. 6591, says of her :—

> " Mais la fame mauvaise qui le roy attrappa,
> Par herbes, par venin, si fort l'envenima,
> Que li rois ne pooit durer ne cà ne là,
> S'il ne véoit la fole qui ainsi l'afola ;
> Et ne pooit véoir celle qui l'espousa,
> Avec lui ne but ne menga ne coucha."

And see the incident of the enchanted girdle, in the Spanish romance published by Buchon at the end of the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, commencing—

> " Doña Blancha esta in Sidonia."

Alburquerque had widely miscalculated the extent of his influence over the mind of his *protégée:* for no sooner was Maria fully assured of the affections of her lover, than she counselled him to throw off the degrading tutelage of his prime minister. This guardianship had now become the more annoying to Peter, as Alburquerque had joined his mother and his aunt, Donna Leonora, dowager-queen of Aragon, in importuning him to fulfil his contract of marriage with Blanche de Bourbon, daughter of the Duke de Bourbon, and niece of John, king of France, to whom he had been affianced for nearly a year, and who was then in Castille, with a large retinue of French nobles, awaiting the solemnization of the marriage. To this alliance Peter had conceived an almost unconquerable aversion; and he permitted his affianced bride to wait three months at Valladolid, while he remained at Torrijos, near Toledo, giving tournaments in honour of his mistress, and receiving the flattering attentions of his new courtiers, in the first exercise of uncontrolled sovereignty.

This scene of gaiety was disturbed by the appearance of Alburquerque, who gravely upbraided the king for his conduct; and declared that the respect which he owed his own character, as well as what was due to a friendly and powerful nation, required him to conclude the marriage with the French princess without further delay. Convinced by such arguments, Peter set out for Valladolid, and hastened the preparations for the marriage, which was solemnized on the 3rd of June, 1353. After the ceremony, he treated his wife with the utmost neglect, scarcely deigning to notice her; and, two days afterwards, he left her at Valladolid, and went to join Maria de Padilla, whom he met at Montalvan. Peter, one of whose greatest vices was dissimulation, while appearing to be guided entirely by the counsels of his minister, had secretly encouraged a party in opposition to him,

composed of his bastard brothers, Henry and Fadrique, to whom he had become lately reconciled, and of all those who were hostile to the arbitrary administration of Alburquerque. The minister, with a large retinue, followed his master from Montalvan to Toledo ; but, being ordered to dismiss his attendants before appearing in the presence of the king, Alburquerque plainly saw that his power was gone ; and, after collecting his treasures, went and shut himself up in his fortress of Carvajalos.

Peter, after the fall of Alburquerque, by his personal attention to the administration of public affairs, by his nocturnal rambles, and by some acts of impartial justice, gave an air of romance to his character, and a certain degree of popularity to his government—at least among the lower orders of his subjects ; but this was insufficient to save him from a formidable conspiracy among the nobles, headed by his disgraced minister, in which, not only his bastard brothers, Henry, Count of Trastamara, Fadrique, grand-master of Sant Jago, and Tello, a younger one, to whom Peter had lately given the heiress of Lara in marriage with the lordship of Biscay, but even his mother, Donna Maria, joined against him.

The confederates continued to increase, notwithstanding the death of their leader, Alburquerque,* until the greater part of the kingdom was involved in the conspiracy ; and Peter was at length reduced, by the defection of his troops, to a body of only six hundred horsemen. Unable to contend with his revolted subjects, Peter gave himself up into their hands, accompanied by Hinestrosa, the

* Alburquerque died suddenly at the town of Medina del Campo, not without strong suspicion of poison, administered by Master Paulo, an Italian physician, at the instigation of the king.—Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 151, 152 ; edited by Don Eugenio de Llaguno, 4to. Madrid, 1779.

uncle of Maria de Padilla, by his Jewish treasurer, Simuel el Levi, and by Fernando Sanchez, his chancellor. Of all the lords who formed his court, these were the only ones who would consent to follow him. A hundred unarmed officers, and servants besides, formed his escort. His submission was unconditional; and the confederates, after requiring his sanction to the appointment of all the officers of the crown, which they had named at their pleasure, ordered him to be conducted to the palace of the Bishop of Zamora, where he was closely guarded. Peter found means, however, to escape from his imprisonment, accompanied by a single attendant; and the great body of his subjects, seeing that the name of the unfortunate Queen Blanche had only been used as a pretext for rebellion, and that nothing had been gained by exchanging the favourites of the king's mistress for a set of officers more insatiable than they, everywhere declared in his favour; and, in three months after he left Toro Castle as a fugitive, he was at the head of a numerous army, and his authority was entirely re-established.

By the late revolt of his subjects, and by his own humiliation and imprisonment, Peter's whole nature was changed. He had been almost wholly abandoned by every one in whom he had trusted; deserted by his bastard brothers, whom he had tried to gain by acts of kindness, and betrayed by his mother, who surrendered his treasures to his enemies and joined the league to humble him, the king entered Toro, doubtless, with the seeds of evil thickly planted in his nature; he left it full of dark suspicions and revenge, and he was already changed into the stern, inexorable, and remorseless tyrant he became.

The first and almost sole object of Peter, after he recovered his authority, was to punish the authors of the late rebellion; and, without pause or weariness, he carried out his unrelenting purpose to the end. After inflicting summary

punishment on some inferior nobles—for Peter never suffered the tedious formalities of law to be interposed between himself and his victim—he turned his attention towards his brothers, the Count of Trastamara and the grand-master of Sant Jago, as the acknowledged heads of the faction. The brothers, after an unsuccessful attempt to hold Toledo, threw themselves into the strong town of Toro, which was soon besieged by the king. The prudent Henry, unwilling to trust his safety to stone walls, however impregnable, quitted the town, under the pretence of returning with reinforcements; but his brother, Fadrique, after a protracted defence, was forced to surrender, upon a promise of forgiveness. But Peter never forgave; and Fadrique, after a respite of two years, was put to death by his orders, under circumstances of peculiar atrocity.* The other leaders taken at the surrender of Toro were slaughtered without delay, in the presence of Donna Maria, the queen-mother, and the Countess of Trastamara, whose garments were covered with their blood.

The reign of Peter is sufficiently filled with details; but, besides an inroad into the Moorish kingdom of Granada, in which he reinstated the dethroned king, Mohammed, and put the usurper, Abu Said, to death, and the capture of several important towns in the kingdom of Aragon, this part of his life is little else than a frightful catalogue of vices and crimes—of women ruined by his lusts, and of men and women slaughtered without restraint or mercy, until none were left in the kingdom of sufficient importance to alarm his jealous fears. Among his other victims was the unfortunate Blanche de Bourbon, his unhappy wife—young, noble, and beautiful—who knew nothing of Castille but its prisons, and who, after a long and wearisome captivity of

* Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 238.

eight years, suddenly died in the castle of Jerez, about the middle of the year 1361. The fatal orders were first sent to Inigo Ortiz de Estuniga, the castellan of Jerez, by Martinez de Urueña, a servant of the king's physician, who had undertaken to poison the queen; but Ortiz, like a gallant knight, declared that no one should attempt the life of his sovereign while under his charge. He was, in consequence, superseded by a willing instrument, Juan Perez de Rebolledo, one of the king's archers; and in a brief space poor Blanche was no more. By such crimes and wickedness Peter had subjected himself to the severest censures of the church, had contrived to alienate the hearts of all his people, and to make himself as much hated as he was feared. He uttered a bitter truth when, advised by his council of war to attack the Aragonese army before Orihuela, while holding in his hand a piece of bread which he had been eating, he said:—

"With this morsel of bread I could feed all the loyal subjects I have in Castille."

The Count of Trastamara, after his escape from the town of Toro, led for years the life of a soldier of fortune, sometimes as the leader of a Free Company, at other times as an ally of Pedro IV. king of Aragon, in his wars with Peter the Cruel; and he does not appear to have had any decided aspirations during that period to the sovereignty of Castille; but, upon his return from France, after an unsuccessful attempt to lead the Free Companies out of that kingdom, in the year 1362,* his views were entirely changed, and he gave out to his friends and followers that he had come to dethrone Peter, and claim the crown as his lawful right. It was, then, to carry out this threat and to press his claims,

* His contract is dated the 13th of August, 1362.—Du Tillet, *Recueil des Traictez, &c.*, and *Inventaire*, p. 85, *recto.*

that the arrival of the Free Companies, under so able a leader as Bertrand du Guesclin, was looked for with such interest by the Count of Trastamara.*

* Most of the incidents contained in the preceding summary of the state of Spain during the first years of the reign of Peter the Cruel have been drawn from the chronicle of Pero Lopez de Ayala, a contemporary and an eye-witness of many of the facts which he records.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bertrand du Guesclin undertakes to lead the Free Companies out of France. His interview with the leaders. The Companies assemble at Châlons, in Burgundy. The army marches to Avignon. The Pope grants absolution, and contributes a large sum of money, as pay, to the troops.

IN the council which was held by Charles V., in the year 1365, to devise some effectual means to rid the kingdom of the Free Companies, Bertrand du Guesclin said that he had greatly desired to cross the sea and aid the king of Cyprus in making war upon the infidels; and now, if he could get access to the leaders of the Companies, he would undertake to carry them out of France. The king gave a willing assent to the proposition; and, thereupon, Bertrand sent his herald without delay to the Free Companies, to ask for himself, in an assembly of all their leaders, a safe conduct to visit them. The herald found them at Châlons, on the Saône, seated at dinner in a richly furnished house, drinking wine. Among them were Sir Hugh Calverly,* the Green

* "Sir Hugh Calverly," says Fuller, "was born at Calverly, in this county (Cheshire). Tradition makes him a man of teeth and hands, who could feed as much as two, and fight as much as ten men. His quick and strong appetite could digest anything but an injury: so that killing a man is reputed the cause of his quitting this country, making hence for London, then for France. Here he became a most eminent

Knight, Matthew de Gournay, Nicholas Escamboune, Robert Scot, Walter Huet, Briquet, the Bourg de Laines, the Bourg de Pierre, John Devereaux, and many others.* To the message delivered by the herald, Sir Hugh Calverly courteously replied :—

"By my faith, gentle herald, I assure you I will see Bertrand here with great pleasure, if the others are agreed; for my own part, I desire it very much, and I will give him some good wine. I can well afford to give it, for it did not cost me half-a-denier."

The leaders all gave their assent to the proposed interview; and a safe conduct was granted and sworn to by all of them. With this passport Bertrand went to meet the leaders of the Companies, by whom he was received with the warmest greeting. Calverly, as soon as he saw the Breton knight, came up and embraced him, calling him, kindly, "friend and companion." Bertrand, somewhat abruptly, replied that he would not be his companion, unless Calverly would consent to do what he came to ask for.

"Bertrand," said Calverly, "by the God who made the world, I will make you the best companion, in every way, and will go wherever you please, to war against all the world, on this side or beyond sea, except the Prince of Wales; but it shall never happen to me to be against him,

soldier, answering the character our great antiquary (Camden) gives him :—*Arte militari ita in Gallia inclaruit, ut vividæ ejus virtuti nihil fuit impervium.*"

After enumerating his principal achievements, Fuller adds :—"The certain date of his death is unknown, which, by proportion, may be collected about the year 1388; after which time no mention of him; and it was as impossible for such a spirit not to be, as not to be active."—"Fuller's Worthies," vol. i. p. 274.

* Cuvelier, vv. 7158, 7190. Froissart adds the names of two other distinguished knights, Sir Eustace d'Aubrecicourt and Sir Perducas d'Albret.—Liv. i. part ii. p. 504.

for, whenever he wishes it, I will go with him. That I have already sworn to."

Du Guesclin readily accepted the terms of his service, when Calverly ordered wine to be brought, of the best which he had. The wine was offered by Sir Walter Huet, who was asked by Bertrand to drink first; but no knight present would drink a drop until their guest had first tasted it. After drinking, Bertrand said:—

"This is a rich wine: you know not what it cost you?"

"No living man," replied the Green Knight, "ever asked me a denier for it."

Bertrand then exposed the object of his visit, telling the leaders that he had come, at the desire of the king of France, to take the Free Companies with him out of the kingdom, and thereby accomplish his own wish to aid the king of Cyprus in his war against the infidels, or attack them in Granada; that he would take them through Spain; and, if he could meet Don Pedro there, the villanous murderer, who had slain his wife, he would do all in his power to harass and anger him. He added, that Spain was a bountiful country, and well supplied with clear and delicious wines; that he had friends who would join them, such as the Count de la Marche, Oliver de Manny, his brothers, and many other knights, who had an equal desire to wage war against the infidels; that, if the leaders would agree to his proposal, the king of France would pay them two hundred thousand florins, and he would lead them himself by Avignon, and obtain for them absolution from all their sins of robbery and murder, besides getting something for them out of the papal treasury, when they would all assemble, and commence their expedition into Spain. "And I beg, for God's sake," Bertrand continued, "that every one of you may have the wish to amend his life: for, if we will look into our hearts, we can easily find that we have all done

enough to damn our souls. I can say, for myself, that I never do good; that I have only done evil, in slaying men; and, if I have done evil, I may well take you as companions, who can properly boast of having committed far worse deeds than I.

"Know you what we shall do?" concluded Bertrand. "Let us honour God, and forsake the devil. As for yourselves, let us see how you have passed your lives. You have violated women and burnt houses; slaughtered men and children, and put everything to ransom; butchered cows, oxen, and sheep; pilfered geese, chickens, and capons; profaned churches and religious houses; and added murder to robbery. For God's sake, then, think well of it; march with me against the infidels; and, if you will take my counsel, I will make you all rich, and we shall gain paradise when we die."

"Sir Bertrand," replied Sir Hugh Calverly, "so aid me St. Simon, I promise that I will never fail you! Let us call each other faithful companions, and never quit each other, unless the king of France should make war against the English: for I am liege-man to the Prince of Wales."

Bertrand promptly signified his acceptance of the engagement, and asked Calverly to obtain the assent, not only of the knights and leaders, but of the individual members of the Companies; promising, on his part, to have the sum of money ready for them which he had offered, and to summon his own friends, who were to accompany them. The leaders of the Companies all gave their immediate consent, and explained Bertrand's offer to their men; but it did not meet with the same prompt acquiescence with them. Some of them rejoiced at the news, others were dissatisfied: for among them there were a number of pillagers, who had no mercy on women and children; who were ready enough to burn down houses; and yet they greatly dreaded the difficulties and dangers of crossing the mountains, especially as France was a country beautiful enough for them, and sufficiently

supplied with provisions and good wine. The leaders, to the number of twenty-five, gave their promise to join Du Guesclin, which the members of the Companies not long after assented to, and they all swore to the fulfilment of their contract. Bertrand then told the leaders that he would go to the king, and first get him to pay them the two hundred thousand francs which he had promised, and that at the proper time he would send them an invitation to come to Paris and dine with him at his own house, when they would have an opportunity of seeing the king himself. "And entertain not the slightest suspicion of evil," Bertrand added: "for I have never been guilty of treachery, nor will I be, while I live."

"No more valiant man was ever seen on the field," replied the knights; "and we have more confidence in your spoken word than in all the prelates and high-learned clerks who are in Avignon, or in all France."

The agreement having been written and sealed, Bertrand, in taking leave of the leaders, repeated his invitation to them to come to Paris, when he would expect them to deliver up their fortresses. To this they also assented. He thereupon went himself to Paris, where the news of his successful negotiation with the leaders of the Free Companies was received with the greatest satisfaction. When Bertrand informed the king that the leaders of the Companies wished to visit Paris, Charles signified a ready assent, and appointed the Temple as their place of lodging. As soon as they received Bertrand's invitation, all the leaders came "in full confidence, and were conducted to the Temple, where they were well received, handsomely entertained, and presented with many gifts." *

* The author of the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, says:— "And Sir Bertrand so acted, that the captains, confiding alone in his

While the leaders of the Free Companies were in Paris, the French knights who intended to accompany Bertrand du Guesclin into Spain came to that city, and formed alliances with their future companions-in-arms. Among these knights were Oliver de Manny and his brothers, Alain and Yvon, Guillaume Boitel, Guillaume de Launoy, Karenlouet, and the Begue de Vilaines. Besides these, the Count de la Marche, the Lord de Beaujeu, and Sir Arnoul d'Audeneham, Maréchal of France, all of whom had sworn to undertake the expedition into Spain against Peter the Cruel, also joined Bertrand. The rendezvous of the army, which was estimated by Froissart at thirty thousand, was fixed at Châlons, on the Saône, in the province of Burgundy, where the different bands assembled, and from whence they marched towards Avignon.*

Pope Urban V., who probably had a very distinct recollection of the ravages committed by the Free Companies under his predecessor, when he heard of their approach to Avignon, sent one of his cardinals to inquire of them the object of their visit. "And tell them for me," he added, "that I, who have the power of God and Saint Mary, and of all the saints, angels, and archangels, will excommunicate the whole company if they do not go from hence without

good faith, without a safe-conduct, came to Paris to the king, who, for the love of Sir Bertrand, received them with great joy."—Ch. lxviii. p. 35.

* Cuvelier, vv. 7191, 7470. The author of the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin* corroborates the narrative by Cuvelier of the negotiation in most particulars, but makes no mention of the two hundred thousand francs promised to the leaders by Bertrand. He says, when the leaders were in Paris, "the king gave them two thousand francs."—Ch. lxviii. Froissart, although he does not give the amount, says that Bertrand's proposition was agreed to the more readily by the leaders, on account of the large sum of money they had to divide among them.—Liv. i. part ii. p. 504.

delay." The cardinal, "who would rather have been chanting mass," did not dare to disobey the orders of his superior; but he went reluctantly, telling a chaplain who accompanied him, "I am grieved at being placed in this charge: for I am sent to an infuriate set, who have no conscience; would to God that the pope himself were there in his janty cope: I believe he would soon enough be stripped of it." The cardinal went on, however, praying that he might safely accomplish his mission, until he came up to the army, when he inquired of some of the soldiers to whom he could deliver a message from the pope. He was replied to by an Englishman, who asked in turn if he had brought any money, for the army would not go away without it. Bertrand and the other leaders then came forward to meet the cardinal, and "all of them bowed with due courtesy;" but there were many others in the army "who would rather have robbed him of his clothes." The cardinal thereupon informed the leaders that he had been sent by the pope to know their purpose in coming to Avignon; to which the Maréchal d'Audeneham, a learned, wise, and prudent knight, replied, that he saw before him a body of men who for years had been committing all sorts of evil deeds in the kingdom of France; that they had designed to go to aid the king of Cyprus, but, hearing that he had been slain,* they were now on their way to make war on the king of Granada, and all who might aid him; that the leaders were conducting them thither, so that they should not return again into France;

* M. Charrière, in his note to verse 6554 of Cuvelier, says that "Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, was assassinated by the lords of his court on the 18th of January, 1368, according to almost all the historians, but on the 16th of January, 1369, according to Guillaume de Macharet;" so that Cuvelier commits an anachronism of at least three years, in placing the death of the king of Cyprus before the departure of the Free Companies from France.

but, before commencing their expedition, each one was desirous of obtaining absolution. "So beg the holy father," added the maréchal, "to grant us absolution by the grace of God, whose vicegerent he is, and release us from all our sins, and from the punishment of the grievous crimes which we have committed since infancy; and that he would make us besides a present of two hundred thousand francs for our expedition."

"My lords," said the cardinal, changing colour when he heard this last demand, "though your numbers are very great, I have no doubt about the absolution; but I will not answer for the money."

"Sir," quickly replied Bertrand du Guesclin, "we must have all that the maréchal has demanded: for, I tell you, there are very many here who care little about absolution—they would much rather have silver. We are making them honest against their wills, and leading them where they may rightfully pillage, without doing injury to Christian people. Say so to the pope, and that we cannot manage them otherwise."

The cardinal promised to bring back the answer of the pope to these demands; to which Bertrand du Guesclin added the caution to make no delay, for he would take up his quarters at Villeneuve, and, if any bread or wine was there, he knew that his men would have it. He would not promise the cardinal to restrain his soldiers from acts of pillage, but he would do his best. On his return to Avignon, the cardinal found the gates of the city closed, and the walls well guarded. He went at once to the palace of the pope, and exposed the results of his mission; how he had delivered his message to Bertrand du Guesclin and the other leaders, who were on their way to the kingdom of Granada to make war on the followers of Mohamed, in order to save their souls; that they had committed great excesses in the

kingdom of France, and that he had brought their confession. "They have burnt many churches and many fine dwellings," continued the cardinal; "slain women and children; violated maidens and dames of high lineage; stolen horses, cattle, and sheep; purloined many jewels and chalices of churches, and much silver, copper, and brass; said many wicked things; committed all the evil that one could do, and more than one could tell: so they beg for mercy and pardon of God, and full absolution from you."

"They shall have it," said the pope, "provided then that they leave the country."

The cardinal replied that they were willing to do so; but they asked, moreover, two hundred thousand francs as a gift. This the pope thought most unreasonable: "for people," he said, "give us money and many gifts to absolve them, and now we must grant absolution at their request, and pay them besides."

As the pope could plainly see, from the windows of his palace, the foraging parties of the Free Companies stripping the country of everything that they could carry away, and, as he expressed it, "taking such pains to go to the devil," he called a council of his cardinals to advise him how so large a sum as they demanded could be raised. It was proposed by one of the cardinals to levy a tax on all citizens of Avignon, according to the ability of each, "so that the treasures of God might not be diminished;" and the proposition was readily adopted by the whole conclave. When Du Guesclin found out that the clergy had collected the amount imposed on them from the poor citizens of the town, he gave vent to his indignation in a very irreverent manner, declaring, that he now saw Christians full of covetousness and bad faith; that vanity and avarice, pride and cruelty, existed in the holy church; that they who ought to give their goods for the cause of God are those who gather

from every quarter, keep their coffers the closest, and never give anything out of their own means. "By the faith I owe the holy Trinity!" he swore, "I will not take one denier of the money which these poor people have paid."

When the assessment was collected, the amount was brought to Bertrand, at Villeneuve, by the provost of Avignon, who stated, on presenting himself, that the money was ready, and the absolution was completed and sealed. Bertrand asked him who had paid the money, and if the pope had taken it out of his own treasury. The provost replied that it was contributed by the common people of Avignon, each one paying his part.

"Provost," said Bertrand, "I assure you I will not take one denier of it. If the amount does not come from the clergy, I am resolved that all who have paid the tax shall have their money back without losing one copper."

"Sire, God grant you a happy life!" said the provost; "the poor people will be greatly rejoiced."

Du Guesclin then ordered the provost to return to Avignon, and say to the pope that he must take the amount from his own treasury, and restore to the people of the town what they had paid; and "tell him," he added, "that it must not be deferred: for, if I know of it, even though I may be then beyond sea, I will return, and he will be greatly displeased."

The money, in consequence, was paid out of the papal treasury, and full absolution was granted to Bertrand and his whole army.*

* Cuvelier, vv. 7474, 7722. "The pope, to indemnify himself for the two hundred thousand francs paid to Bertrand du Guesclin, imposed a tenth on the clergy of France."—Note of the editor to verse 7427. Some doubt has been thrown on that portion of the statement of Cuvelier, where Bertrand required the money to be paid out of the papal treasury. It is fully sustained by the anonymous author of the *Chronique de Du*

Guesclin, ch. lxvii. p. 36; and Raynaldus, the annalist of the church and Continuator of Baronius, says that the Free Companies, under the conduct of Bertrand du Guesclin, "approached Avignon, and, having put the pope and cardinals in great terror, extorted from them a large amount of gold, which was demanded under the decent name of pay (honesto nomine stipendiorum), as they gave out that they were marching against the Moors of Granada."—*Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1365, § 7.

CHAPTER XIX.

Bertrand du Guesclin crosses the Pyrenees with his army into Spain. Declares his purpose in entering that kingdom. Henry of Trastamara is proclaimed king of Castille at Calahorra. Peter the Cruel first fortifies, then abandons, Burgos, and retires into Andalusia.

WHEN Bertrand du Guesclin had obtained the material and spiritual aid which constituted his chief motives in passing by Avignon, he set out for the frontiers of Spain, towards the conclusion of the year 1365. At Toulouse he received an accession of four hundred volunteers from that city, "whose only motives in making war were honour, faith, and the love of God."*

* The names of some seventy or eighty of "the most valiant" of these adventurers are given in a chanson *To Dona Clamenca*, in the Limousin tongue, entitled, *Canson ditta La Bertat* (the Truth), *fatta sur la guerra d'Espagna, fatta pel generosa Guesclin assistat des nobles Moundis de Tholosa.* It bears date April, 1367. Published by Morice, in *Actes de Bretagne*, tom. i. col. 1616, and by Buchon, at the end of prose Chronicle of Bertrand du Guesclin. In the same chanson it is asserted that, at Carcassonne, and not at Toulouse, as it may be inferred from the chronicle of Cuvelier, v. 7725, the interview between the Duke of Anjou and Du Guesclin took place, and which Vaissette, in his "History of Languedoc," has taked some pains to deny :—

"à Carcassonne
Ount lou duc d'Anjou en perçonne
Lous recebouc aube gran lau."

On his way he met with the Duke of Anjou, at Carcassonne, who strenuously urged him to take vengeance on Peter the Cruel for his many crimes, and especially for the death of his cousin, Blanche de Bourbon. Bertrand promised, somewhat evasively, and then pursued his way across the Pyrenees into Spain.

When he reached the kingdom of Aragon with his army, Peter the Cruel was pursuing his conquests in that kingdom, and was then at the summit of his power. Insubordination among the nobles had been suppressed; but it was by the death of every one influential enough to alarm the fears, or even excite the suspicions, of the jealous monarch. The people were everywhere obedient and submissive; but the king painfully felt that the quiet about his throne proceeded from the stillness and moral degradation of servitude. He had been successful in his petty military enterprises, and his coffers were full. It was not, therefore, surprising, when he first heard of the designs of the Free Companies in coming to Spain, that he treated their message with contempt, declaring that he would yield nothing "to such beggars."* He soon had reason, however, to change his estimate of them, when he found his kingdom invaded by a large and well-disciplined body of men-at-arms, with such a leader as Bertrand du Guesclin at their head; and, from confidence, he sank at once into dejection, irresolution, and timidity, abandoned one stronghold after another, and finally left the kingdom, without striking one single blow for his crown.

On the other side, Pedro IV., king of Aragon, and the Count of Trastamara had almost equal reasons to rejoice at the arrival of Du Guesclin and his army. The king of Aragon, with most of the vices of his namesake of Castille, and who perhaps exceeded him in dissimulation and bad

* Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 505.

faith, was inferior to him in power, extent of dominion, and good fortune. He had been unsuccessful in most of his military adventures with Peter the Cruel; he had even reason to fear that the kingdom of Aragon, by the ambition and enterprise of his enemy, might be added to the more extensive kingdom of Castille; and, therefore, the approach of the Free Companies was regarded by him as the means of restoring the integrity of his territories, and preserving the security of his throne; while the wary and prudent Henry of Trastamara, a homeless and mercenary adventurer, hoped thereby to gain no less a prize than the crown of the Castilles.

Bertrand du Guesclin had hitherto carefully kept out of view the chief object of his expedition to Spain. In his promise to the king of France to lead the Companies out of the kingdom, in his subsequent treaty with their leaders, and in the reason given to the pope for his passage by Avignon,—war with the infidels, to exalt the Christian name, was the avowed motive, while the deposition of Peter the Cruel, or the elevation of the Count of Trastamara, was never, even remotely, alluded to. In all his conferences on the subject he used no stronger language than, "if he met with Peter, he would irritate or greatly disturb him." Bertrand felt that such caution was necessary, while the Free Companies were yet in France: for the treaty of Bordeaux, between Edward III. and Peter the Cruel, still subsisted,* and it might justly be apprehended that the Black Prince would prevent his liege-men—of which the Companies

* Edward III., in a letter dated December 6th, 1365, addressed to John Chandos, Viscount of Saint Sauveur, Hugh Calverly, Nicholas Dagworth, and William Elmham, knights, expressly prohibited all his liege-men from entering Spain in a hostile manner, or engaging in the service of any person whomsoever to the prejudice of the king of that country.—Rymer, vol. iii. par. ii. p. 779.

chiefly consisted—from making war on an ally, and giving consequence to his bastard brother, whom, as the confederate of France, he had every reason to distrust. But, when he had crossed the mountains into Spain, Bertrand du Guesclin, relieved of the motives for concealment, no longer hesitated to declare his purposes. At his first interview, therefore, with the Count of Trastamara, at Blamont, he promised that leader that he would not return again to France until he had placed the crown of Spain on his head; and, when pressed by Pedro of Aragon, at his court, to abandon his avowed design of going against Granada, and undertake instead an expedition against Peter the Cruel, he replied, that his real objects in coming were to aid Henry of Trastamara with all his power, and crown him king of Spain; to drive Peter out of the kingdom; and, with the aid of God, avenge the death of the good queen.

The king of Aragon, who fully appreciated the value of Bertrand's services, did not confine his aid to counsel alone, but promptly supplied him with whatever was most necessary for the support of his army. He not only paid him down one hundred thousand gold florins, but furnished him liberally with corn, oats, wine, and fresh meat. Such preparations could not escape the jealous vigilance of Peter the Cruel, who was soon informed of the arrival of the invaders. They were described, by the messenger who brought him the unwelcome news, as "a company which is called white: each one has a white cross above his shoulder, and they come from the borders of France."

"Who leads them?" asked the king.

"Bertrand du Guesclin," replied the messenger.

At the name of Bertrand, Peter abandoned himself to the most unmanly fears, declaring that he would be forced to fly from Spain; that the eagle was now come which would chase him out of his kingdom; and that he would not await

Bertrand for the gold of a whole country. Acted on by such fears, he immediately quitted Aragon, and, leaving garrisons in the fortresses of Magalon, Borja, and Briviesca, he took refuge in the strong town of Burgos, which he furnished with everything necessary for a siege; and he made it still more secure by deepening the ditches and raising the walls. Notwithstanding all these precautions, "he yet greatly dreaded the coming of Bertrand." *

Bertrand du Guesclin had been sufficiently supplied with provisions, by the prompt liberality of Pedro IV., and he was preparing, at the commencement of the year 1366, to leave the kingdom of Aragon with his army; but, before setting out, he inquired of the Count of Trastamara where they could soonest find Peter of Castille, "who fled before them like a stag from a dog in the woods." Henry thought it best not to leave behind them the towns of Magalon and Borja, in which Peter had left garrisons, before retreating into Castille; and, as the commanders of the garrisons refused to listen to the terms of surrender proposed, Bertrand proceeded to besiege these towns successively. Both of

* Cuvelier, vv. 7865, 7973. The white cross alluded to at verse 7886, which gave the name of the White Company to Bertrand's army, was probably adopted by him, before leaving France, to conceal the real design of the expedition, and give colour to the declaration that it was a crusade against the infidels. At verse 7980 Cuvelier again alludes to this badge :—

"Il n'i avoit en l'ost chevalier ne garçon
Qui ne portast la crois blanche comme coton,
Et la blanche Compaigne pour tant l'appeloit-on."

The eagle, referred to by Peter at verse 7899, was probably an allusion to the device on the shield of Bertrand, which was an eagle with two heads. See *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. lxxiii. p. 40; and Cuvelier, v. 15,988, says :—

"Je voy là sa banière balant contre le vent,
A i. aigle de sable dont le champ est argent."

them yielded after a spirited defence; and, while Magalon was abandoned to pillage, Borja was spared through the prayers of the women. The Jews and Moors, however, did not participate in the pardon granted to the Christians, and they were all put to the sword. Bertrand was created Count of Borja, and the town was granted to him by the king of Aragon, as a recompense for his services.*

After the surrender of Borja, Bertrand du Guesclin passed over into Castille, near the frontier town of Alfaro, which was commanded by Inigo Lopez de Orozco. As it was a place of no great consequence, it was decided not to attack it, but to pass on to the more important town of Calahorra, which was known to be so imperfectly fortified, that the inhabitants would not venture to defend it. The town soon surrendered, as anticipated; and, thereupon, Bertrand du Guesclin, Sir Hugh Calverly, and the other French and English leaders, regarding the kingdom as already won, after the capture of a single town, said to Henry of Trastamara, "that, since such noble men as they who had accompanied him were agreed to hold him as their chief, and as they had now taken a town of Castille, they asked that he would allow himself to be created king: for they held, according to the information which they had of the country, that Don Pedro would not give them battle, nor could he defend the kingdom." In this request the Count de Denia, the leader of the Aragonese auxiliaries, joined with the other nobles and knights of Aragon who were present; and, although Henry could not be induced, at first, to take that step, yet he was greatly pleased at the proposal. Notwithstanding his coyness, which was probably only affected, as soon as the army entered the town he was proclaimed king.†

* Cuvelier, vv. 7985, 8145.

† Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 400, 401.

Henry did not remain long at Calahorra after his election as king by his troops; and on his way, in pursuit of Peter, he laid siege to Briviesca, near Burgos, a strongly-fortified town, with double walls, which, it was confidently believed, would stand a siege during an entire year; and the garrison, acting on this belief, contemptuously replied to Henry's claims to their allegiance and to his summons of surrender, "that they would do no such thing." The town was soon invested on all sides, and the troops exhibited extraordinary emulation in their different assaults. Sir Hugh Calverly, with the English, attacked the quarter of the town inhabited by the Jews; while Bertrand du Guesclin, with the French, conducted in person, with his formidable battle-axe in his hand, the assault at the barriers. Many of the leaders particularly distinguished themselves; and, among them, Alain de la Houssoie, determined to conquer, was thrown headlong from the walls into the moat, and had one of his arms broken. On all sides could be heard the battle-cries of the different leaders: "Guesclin!" "Calverly!" "La Marche!" and "Audeneham!" The besieged defended themselves with great courage and obstinacy, using every means of resistance known at that time, until a Breton soldier, with one of Bertrand's pennons, mounted the walls, followed by his comrades, who, by the aid of rope-ladders and grappling irons, "crawled up the walls like apes;" and the governor, seeing all further opposition hopeless, surrendered, "saving life and goods." Calverly carried by storm the Jewish quarter, with a general slaughter of the inhabitants; and a large booty was acquired, both by leaders and men, from their spoils.*

* Cuvelier, vv. 8147, 8348. The author of the *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin* says that the following ruse was practised by Bertrand, in order to excite the national emulation of his troops. "It happened, during the assault, that Bertrand said to the French that the English had entered the town before they had yet descended into the fosses.

After the surrender of Briviesca, two citizens of the town, who had been very deeply impressed during the siege by the military skill and impetuous valour of the army under Bertrand du Guesclin, made their escape and fled to Burgos, where they found Peter the Cruel in his palace, alone with Fernando de Castro, the only Spanish noble who, through all the changes of fortune, faithfully adhered to the king.* To the inquiry of Peter, how his good people sustained themselves at Briviesca, the citizens replied :—"Badly enough : for Bertrand du Guesclin, your brother Henry, and the other leaders, made an assault on the town, the like of which was never before seen ; and the French mounted the walls, took the town, slaughtered the Jews and infidels, with a great number of our men also."

"False traitors!" exclaimed the king, in great wrath ; "how could Briviesca be taken by assault in one day? It cannot be so. You have sold it to Henry and the savage Bertrand, who has sworn my death."

The French, when they heard these words, could only be angry with themselves, for they fully believed Sir Bertrand. They then renewed the assault with such valour that they entered into Briviesca as far as the middle of the town, before the English had reached the foot of the walls."—Ch. lxxi. p. 38. Ayala enters into no detail of the siege. He says the town was assailed and carried by storm, and that the commander, Men Rodriguez de Senambia, a Galician knight, was taken prisoner, while fighting at the barriers, by Sir Bernal de la Salle, a knight of Gascony.—*Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 402.

* Fernando de Castro was the brother of Donna Juana de Castro, that wife of a day, whom Peter the Cruel overcame all obstacles to marry during the lifetime of his wife, Blanche de Bourbon, and his mistress, Maria de Padilla, and whom he abandoned, without any assignable cause, the day after his nuptials. Fernando had also a natural sister, the celebrated Inez de Castro, the mistress, perhaps the wife, of the Infante Pedro of Portugal, whose tragic death, the honours paid to her memory, and the terrible vengeance of her lover, have supplied abundant material to both poet and historian. See Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 130 and 415, note (1).

"By the honoured Virgin!" protested the citizens, "no treason has been committed or thought of, and no money has been received; but the town was carried by force of arms and fierce rencounter, by brave men, and a large body of archers and arbelists, who spared not their own lives, and who had no dread of wounds, or regard for sweat and blood. There is no town or city so well fortified in the whole world that can withstand them. They are not natural born men, but devils come out of hell into this country."

Peter would listen to no excuses or prayers. He insisted that the town had been surrendered through treason, and ordered the two citizens of Briviesca to be hanged for their unwelcome tidings. The information of the surrender of the town was soon confirmed by other witnesses; and Peter, as soon as he recovered from the torpor into which he had been thrown by the loss of one of his strongest fortresses, instantly determined to leave the city of Burgos.* Without imparting his design to any of the lords or knights who were about him, he made hasty preparations for his departure.

When this purpose of the king was found out by the citizens of Burgos, they assembled, without distinction, before the palace, and earnestly entreated him not to abandon them; telling him that he had sufficient forces to defend the city, and abundant means to support an army; and, if he required more, they would give up all they had. Peter, standing at the door of his palace, with everything ready for immediate flight, thanked the citizens for their offers, and acknowledged the loyalty which influenced their conduct; but bluntly told them that he must go, as he had certain information that his brother Henry and the Free Companies designed to march towards Seville, where he had left his children and treasures, and that he must put

* Cuvelier, vv. 8349, 8480.

them in a place of security. The citizens, not convinced by the reasons offered by the king, still continued their entreaties; but, when they found that he was immoveable, they asked:—

"My lord, since you know that your enemies are eight leagues distant from this place, and you will not venture to await them in your noble city of Burgos, with such forces as you possess, what do you command us to do, and how shall we defend ourselves?"

"I bid you do the best you can," abruptly replied the king.

"My lord," again asked the citizens, not satisfied with this response, "we hope to have the good fortune to defend the city from your enemies; but, since you dare not, with so many people and such brave troops, to defend it, what can we do? Therefore, if it so happens that we cannot make a good defence, will you acquit us of the covenant and oath which we have made to you for this city?"

To this proposition Peter assented; and the citizens had an instrument of writing drawn up by notaries, and signed to that effect. Before the king could set out, one of the receivers of the revenue in the diocese of Burgos asked him what he should do with the castle: for he would not be able to defend it after the king had abandoned the city.

"You must defend it," said Peter, moving off.

"But, my lord," replied Rui Perez, the receiver, "I have no ability to defend the castle, as you are about to leave the city."

Peter deigned him no answer. Great, however, as was his eagerness to get away—at a time when, above all others, it was important to him to conciliate the affections of such of his subjects as still adhered to him—he could not leave Burgos without another signal act of vengeance and blood-

shed; and, accordingly, just before setting out, he ordered the execution of Juan Fernandez de Tovar, for no other apparent crime than that he was the brother of Don Ferrand Sanchez de Tovar, who had admitted Bertrand du Guesclin and his brother Henry of Trastamara into the indefensible city of Calahorra.

On the 28th of March, 1366, Peter left Burgos, attended by a small retinue of Castilian knights and squires, among whom was the historian Ayala, and a body of six hundred Moorish horse, sent him by the king of Granada, under a knight named Don Mohammed el Cabeszani. Before leaving Burgos, the king had sent an order to the commandants of the fortresses which he held in the kingdom of Aragon, to abandon and destroy them, by fire or otherwise, and return to him with their forces. The fortresses were abandoned, according to his instructions; but, while some of the leaders, with their troops, obeyed the orders to join Peter, the others repaired to the standard of Henry. On his way towards Andalucia, Peter was met by the grand-master of Sant Jago, and some other nobles; but, such was his anxiety to reach Seville, or such his debasement at his changed fortunes, that he could not be induced by them to take any interest in the most important affairs, or even inspect certain companies which had just joined his forces; and, when informed by one of his officers that several English captains, lately attached to his brother Henry, desired to treat with him, "he would not hear of it, and cared nothing about it." Even at Toledo he made no longer stay than to strengthen the garrison, and appoint Don Garcia Alvarez, master of Sant Jago, governor of the city.*

* Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 402, 405.

CHAPTER XX.

Burgos surrenders, and Henry of Trastamara is then crowned king of Castille and Léon. Peter leaves Seville with his children and treasures; passes through Portugal into Galicia; and then embarks at Corunna for Bayonne.

SOON after the departure of Peter from Burgos, Henry of Trastamara received a letter from that city, informing him that the king had suddenly left it and gone to Toledo. Bertrand du Guesclin thereupon issued orders forthwith for his army to leave Briviesca the following morning. "Then could be seen the harness put in order, and lances, darts, and armour, arbelists, triangular arrows, and arrows for the bow; tents, pavilions, and torches for lights; banners and pennons; large copper kettles and caldrons to cook dinner; bread, wine, and salt-meat, with everything necessary for such an army, carried in waggons and on sumpter-horses." The vanguard was conducted by the Maréchal d'Audeneham, aided by Calverly, Oliver de Manny, and other leaders; while the rear was brought up by Bertrand du Guesclin and the Count de la Marche. When the approach of the army under Du Guesclin was known in Burgos, the citizens assembled at the sound of the great bell; and, upon the advice of the bishop, took counsel what they should do in their pressing emergency. One of the burgesses then stated that, as there were

three different races in Burgos, living under different laws,* it was important to know of each what should be done. He therefore suggested that the Moors and Jews should consult separately, and report to the meeting the result of their deliberations. This proposition was adopted; and, while the others were conferring apart, the Bishop of Burgos, having first exacted an oath on the holy gospels from each one present to keep secret the proceedings of the meeting, declared that Peter was unworthy to reign; that he was a sceptic and an infidel; that he had no more remorse than a dog, for putting freemen to death without a trial; and that it would be far better to have a knight who would govern the kingdom according to law and justice, than obey a king who had no respect for God.† This conclusion of the bishop had already been adopted without dissent by the meeting, when the Moors reported, through one of their number, that they would be governed by the decision of the Christian portion of the assembly, and that they would aid

* There was no institution or custom more peculiar or anomalous, during the Middle Ages, when the laws regulating property and the rights of persons were so imperfectly defined, than the system of *personal laws*, which existed wherever the Germanic nations settled upon the Roman soil. The Frank, the Burgundian, and the Goth lived upon the same territory, each under his own law. De Savigny thus explains the following passage in a letter of Angobardus to Louis *le Débonnaire*:—"Five persons could often be seen conversing together, no two of whom obeyed the same laws." See *Histoire du Droit Romain au Moyen Age*, tom. i. p. 90, *et seq.* In like manner the Moors and Jews of Spain, when they were permitted by their conquerors to reside in the country, were not only allowed to enjoy, under certain restrictions, the exercise of their religion, and to hold lands, but they were suffered to elect their own magistrates, and even designate the Castilian judge before whom their cause was to be tried.—Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 64, 65.

† The bishop in his speech repeated a scandal, very common at that time among the partisans of Henry, that Peter was the son of a Jewess, and that he had been exchanged in infancy for a daughter of the queen.—Cuvelier, v. 8619 and 6975.

them in maintaining it with body and goods. The Jews, after longer deliberation, first required from the others an oath, on their law and good faith, that, if they could not agree to the decision adopted by the majority, they might be permitted to leave the city in safety with their property, and go either into Portugal or Aragon. The promise being given, the Jews cautiously declared, as their only answer, that Peter was an unworthy Christian, since he was false to his own faith. This declaration was regarded as sufficient by the rest of the assembly; and, thereupon, a message was despatched by two cordeliers to Henry, to the effect that the citizens of Burgos would give him up the keys of the city, and acknowledge him as their king, on the sole condition that he would maintain their franchises. The messengers, having obtained a favourable answer, returned to Burgos, where the citizens were making great preparations to receive their new master. On the next day a large body of the good people of Burgos left the city at sunrise, with the bishop, attended by the clergy, at their head, bearing aloft the cross and gonfalon, and chanting aloud *Te Deum Laudamus*. After these followed the most influential burghers, with eight sergeants at their head, each one bearing a lance, and to each lance was suspended one of the eight keys of the city. Next came the ladies of Burgos, "so nobly dressed, and of such charming mien, as if each might have been the wife of a syndic,* or of the good king of France." In this order the procession marched four leagues before they met with Henry and the army under Bertrand du Guesclin.†

* "Que se chascune fust la fame d'un soudant,
Ou du bon roy de France."—Cuvelier, v. 8752.

Soudan, a name formerly given to the Syndics in the Bordelais.—Bescherelle; and see Du Cange, voc. *Syndicus*.

† Cuvelier, vv. 8512, 8759. *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. lxxi. lxxii. pp. 38, 39. The author of the prose Chronicle, though

Henry was greatly moved by this manifestation of respect and submission on the part of the citizens of Burgos; and, after a pious invocation of the blessings of heaven on his followers, he extended his hand to Du Guesclin, in the presence of all there assembled, and acknowledged his deep obligation to him for the success of all his measures. At the instance of the bishop, Henry then swore to maintain the ancient liberties and franchises of Burgos; whereupon all the leaders entered the city, amid the general ringing of bells, leaving the body of the army in the suburbs. Henry, in anticipation of his coronation, at the suggestion of Bertrand, had sent for his wife,* whom he had left with his three sisters at the castle of Blamont. The Countess of Trastamara, who was "beautiful, good, pleasant, and accomplished," upon receiving the welcome intelligence of the good fortune of her husband, set out, without delay, with her sisters-in-law, and travelled in a handsome chariot until she came near Burgos, when she descended from her carriage and mounted a richly-caparisoned mule. At the distance of two leagues from the city she was met by Bertrand du Guesclin, the Count de la Marche, Sir Hugh Calverly, the Maréchal d'Audeneham, and a body of about a thousand knights, who had come for the purpose of escorting her into Burgos. At the approach of the horsemen, the countess dismounted, and prepared to receive them on foot. The knights, as they came up, also dismounted; and when Du Guesclin, after saluting her, respectfully insisted that she

less extended as to details than Cuvelier, sustains the latter in every statement, except the assent of the Jews to the proposition of the bishop. He says:—"But the Jews contradicted him; whereupon the town flew to arms, and slaughtered all the Jews and Saracens."

* She was Donna Juana de Villena, niece of Don Juan Nuñez de Lara, grand standard-bearer of Castille at the accession of Peter the Cruel.

should remount, the lady replied that it well became her to receive him on foot, who had done so much to serve and honour her; and to the other knights she said so many kind things, that they all declared, "she well deserved a crown." After the party had remounted, and while they were proceeding on their way towards Burgos, the sisters of the Count of Trastamara very attentively observed Bertrand du Guesclin for some time, when one of them said:—

"I see here this Bertrand, of whom I have heard so much; how marvellously plain he is: yet he has been so much prized and honoured."

"May God protect him!" replied the second sister. "We should love worth more than beauty. He is the most valiant man on this side of the sea: the most adventurous in gaining a battle, and the most successful in taking castles, to be found in this age."

"Now look carefully at him," said the third. "He has a fine manly person, with the mien of a wild boar: with fists large and square, fit for bearing a sword, and legs and thighs capable of enduring great fatigue. I pray God that he may end his life with honour!"*

The Countess of Trastamara was conducted by her noble and gallant escort of lords and knights into Burgos, where she was welcomed by the fair citizens, clothed in their richest attire, and accompanied to the palace which had been prepared for her reception.† On the following Sunday, which was Easter, the coronation took place in the church

* Cuvelier, vv. 8760, 8885; *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. lxxiii. pp. 39, 40.

† Ayala differs both from Cuvelier and the author of the prose Chronicle of Du Guesclin, and says that Donna Juana, the wife of Henry, was sent for from Burgos, but that she did not arrive before her husband had left the city.—*Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 410. Ayala was not present at the coronation, as he was one of those who accompanied Peter in his precipitate flight from Burgos.

of the monastery of Las Huelgas; and that ceremony was followed by a splendid dinner, "consisting of all good things, besides plovers, herons, and roasted capons, with the richest wines of the country." Henry, when he became a king, did not delay in showing his appreciation of the services of the brave men who had placed the crown of the Castilles on his head; and, accordingly, one of the first acts of his administration was to distribute his favours with a liberal hand. As he probably supposed that he would have no further need of his private fortune, he gave the county of Trastamara, with the title of count, to Bertrand du Guesclin, whom he afterwards created Duke of Molina; and to the Count de Denia, the leader of the Aragonese auxiliaries, he gave the lands which had formed the dowry of his wife, with the title of Marquis of Villena. Sir Hugh Calverly was created Count of Carrion, and to the Begue de Villaines he gave the county of Ribadea. Among all the foreign knights he distributed large gifts and rich jewels; and so bountifully, that "they all spoke of him as a liberal and honourable lord, and as worthy to live and reign in great prosperity." Such profuse liberality on the part of their new monarch was regarded with some jealousy by his Castilian subjects, and "Don Enrique's favours" became a proverbial expression in their language, at that time, to signify such rewards as were received before they were earned.*

As Peter the Cruel showed no intention to defend his most important places, or meet his enemies in the field, the leaders of the Free Companies regarded the kingdom as already conquered, and supposed that thenceforth there would

* Cuvelier, vv. 8892, 8920; Froissart, liv. i. part ii. p. 506; *Chronique* (Anonyme) *de Du Guesclin*, ch. lxxiii.; Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 408; Mérimée's "Hist. of Peter the Cruel," vol. ii. p. 203.

be little for them to do: so it was proposed in one of their councils that they should march against the infidels in the neighbouring kingdom of Granada. Henry, who was far from believing that the crown which he had lately assumed was already won, and who knew how much of his previous success was due to the terror impressed on the mind of Peter and his troops by the disciplined valour of his foreign mercenaries, was greatly alarmed at the apprehension of losing their aid, at the very moment when he hoped to make his conquests secure. He therefore used every argument to induce the leaders not to abandon him at that time: "for Peter," he said, "would return, and leave him neither wife nor child;" and where, he asked them, could they expect to acquire greater booty than in conquering Spain; or, if they sought infidels and Jews, they could find enough of both in the kingdom, whom they might slaughter at their will. To these arguments the queen joined her passionate intercession, offering high pay, with whatever else she possessed of gold, silver, or jewels; adding, "I have no cincture, and nothing great or small, that I would not give to be delivered from the tyrant, even were I to drink out of glass during the balance of my life, or be forced to wear but a single robe of buckram." The earnestness and eloquence of the queen, apart from the tempting offers of increased pay and abundant booty, made these stern warriors at once give way; and Bertrand du Guesclin, the Begue de Villaines, the Maréchal d'Audeneham, Sir Hugh Calverly, Walter Huet, and Escamboune, successively expressed the determination of the chiefs to remain with Henry, and aid him in driving Peter out of the kingdom.*

Henry, after settling his affairs at Burgos, left the city and proceeded towards Toledo. While on his way he received

* Cuvelier, vv. 8979, 9040.

the submission of many cities and towns, as well as the adhesion of a number of nobles and knights; among whom was Don Diego Garcia de Padilla, Master of Calatrava, and brother of Maria de Padilla, the late mistress or wife of Peter.* When Henry approached Toledo, much dissension sprang up among the different parties in the city: for, while Don Garcia Alvarez, grand-master of Sant Jago, who had been left in command of the city, with his brother Ferrand Alvarez, and some Castilian knights, still adhered to Peter, a large and influential body of the citizens, headed by Diego Gomez, the mayor, and commandant of the castle, favoured the claims of Henry. At length it was agreed to admit Henry into the city; and the governor, Don Garcia Alvarez, not only opened the gates, but, in consideration of a large reward, surrendered the mastership of Sant Jago, which was claimed by Don Gonzalo Mexia, a partisan of Henry.

During his sojourn of fifteen days in Toledo, Henry imposed a very large fine, amounting to a million maravedis, on the Jews of the city, which was paid before he left the place, and which served the double purpose of paying his troops and increasing his popularity with his Castilian subjects: for, apart from his irreverence for the church, and contempt for its ministers, Peter had lost in a great degree the regard of the Christian portion of his subjects, by his continued trust and confidence in the Jews and Moors of the kingdom. While he remained in Toledo, Henry received the procurators of a number of towns and important places in Castille and Léon, who came to offer him their homage, and acknowledge him as their sovereign. On leaving Toledo, he appointed as governor Don Gomez

* Maria de Padilla died at Seville, in the month of July, 1362.—Ayala, p. 333.

Manrique, the popular archbishop of that city, and followed his rival, Peter, into the province of Andalucia.*

Peter found, soon after his arrival at his favourite city of Seville, that it was not more to be trusted than the other cities of his kingdom ; and, thereupon, he resolved to send his eldest daughter, Donna Beatriz, to his uncle Pedro, king of Portugal, to whose son, Don Ferdinand, she had been affianced, with the dowry which he had given her, besides a large quantity of doubloons and jewellery, which had been left to her by her mother, Maria de Padilla. Upon learning that Henry had left Toledo in pursuit of him, he collected all his treasures and placed them on board an armed galley, under the charge of his treasurer, Martin Yanez, with orders to proceed to Tavira, in Portugal, and there wait for him. Then, fearing for his own safety, he listened to reports that the citizens were greatly excited against him, and that they were making preparations to besiege him in his castle,† and hastily left the city, with his two youngest daughters, Constance and Isabel, and fled in great terror towards the borders of Portugal. Before reaching that kingdom Peter was enabled to realize how low he had fallen, by a message he received from the king of Portugal, that "the Infante Don Ferdinand does not desire to wed the Infanta Donna Beatriz, and that he could not see him." To add to his humiliation, he was informed, at the same time, that Bocanegra, his Genoese admiral, hitherto deemed faithful, had sailed from Seville with an armed

* Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 410, 412.

† Cuvelier, who differs materially from Ayala, and enters into much detail as to the incidents which led to the entrance of Henry into Seville, states that the hostile designs of the Jewish portion of the citizens were disclosed to Peter by a beautiful Jewish maiden, one of his numerous mistresses, who also informed him that the Christian portion of the population had agreed to receive Henry ; which so alarmed his fears, that he left Seville before sunrise of the next day, vv. 9543, 9560.

galley and other ships, attacked the vessel in which he had placed his treasures, and captured it, with Yanez, his treasurer.*

These unwelcome tidings decided Peter to await at Albuquerque the result of a request which he had made to the king of Portugal, for a safe-conduct through his dominions into Galicia. The king of Portugal accordingly sent Don Alvar Perez de Castro and the Count of Barcelos to accompany him; but they would proceed little farther than half-way to the town of Guarda, for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Infante Don Ferdinand of Portugal, who was the nephew of Donna Juana, the wife of Henry. They promised, however, upon receiving six thousand doubloons and two swords with rich silver belts, to attend Peter as far as the borders of Galicia; but they abandoned him at Lamego, on the Douro, and he was forced to gain the frontiers of his own kingdom without their escort.

The province of Galicia still preserved its loyalty to Peter; but it was too poor a country to supply him with any very material aid. Here, however, he was permitted to look about him and examine what resources he might still rely on. He had with him but two hundred horse. He was informed that five hundred horse and two thousand foot could be raised in Galicia, and that Soria and Logroño, with the castle of Zamora, were still true to him. This was very insufficient means to resist the numerous and well-trained troops of his brother Henry, so Peter adopted the counsel that accorded best with his own fears, and resolved to leave the kingdom; but, as he could not go away without another taste of blood, as at Burgos, he witnessed from an elevation in the church the assassination of the Archbishop

* The prize amounted to thirty-six quintals of gold, besides many jewels.—Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, p. 420.

of Sant Jago; and, after receiving a favourable response to a message he had sent to Edward, Prince of Wales, he embarked at Corunna, with his daughters and the treasures which he carried with him.*

* Ayala, *Cronica del Rey Don Pedro*, pp. 412, 420.

END OF VOL. I.